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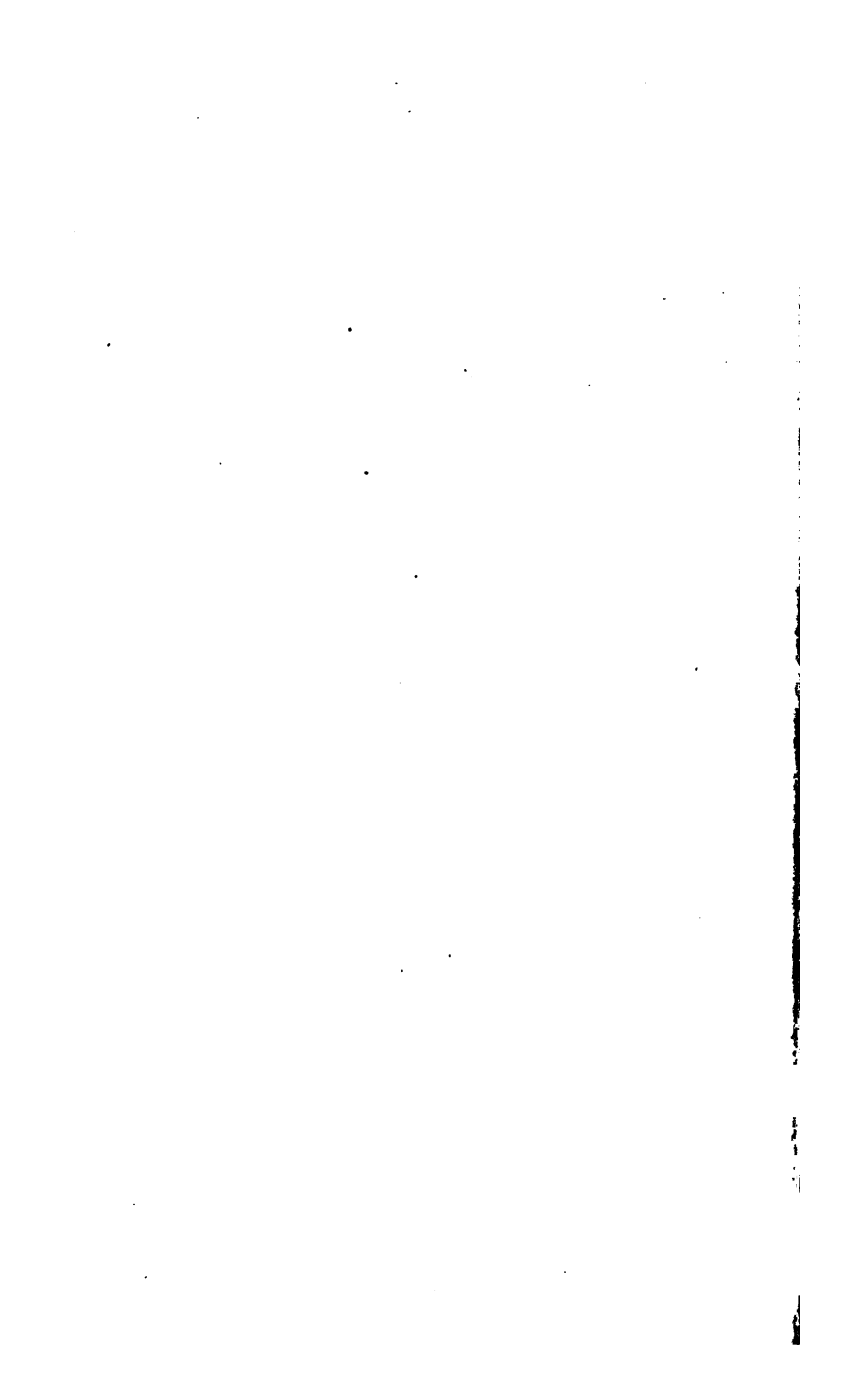
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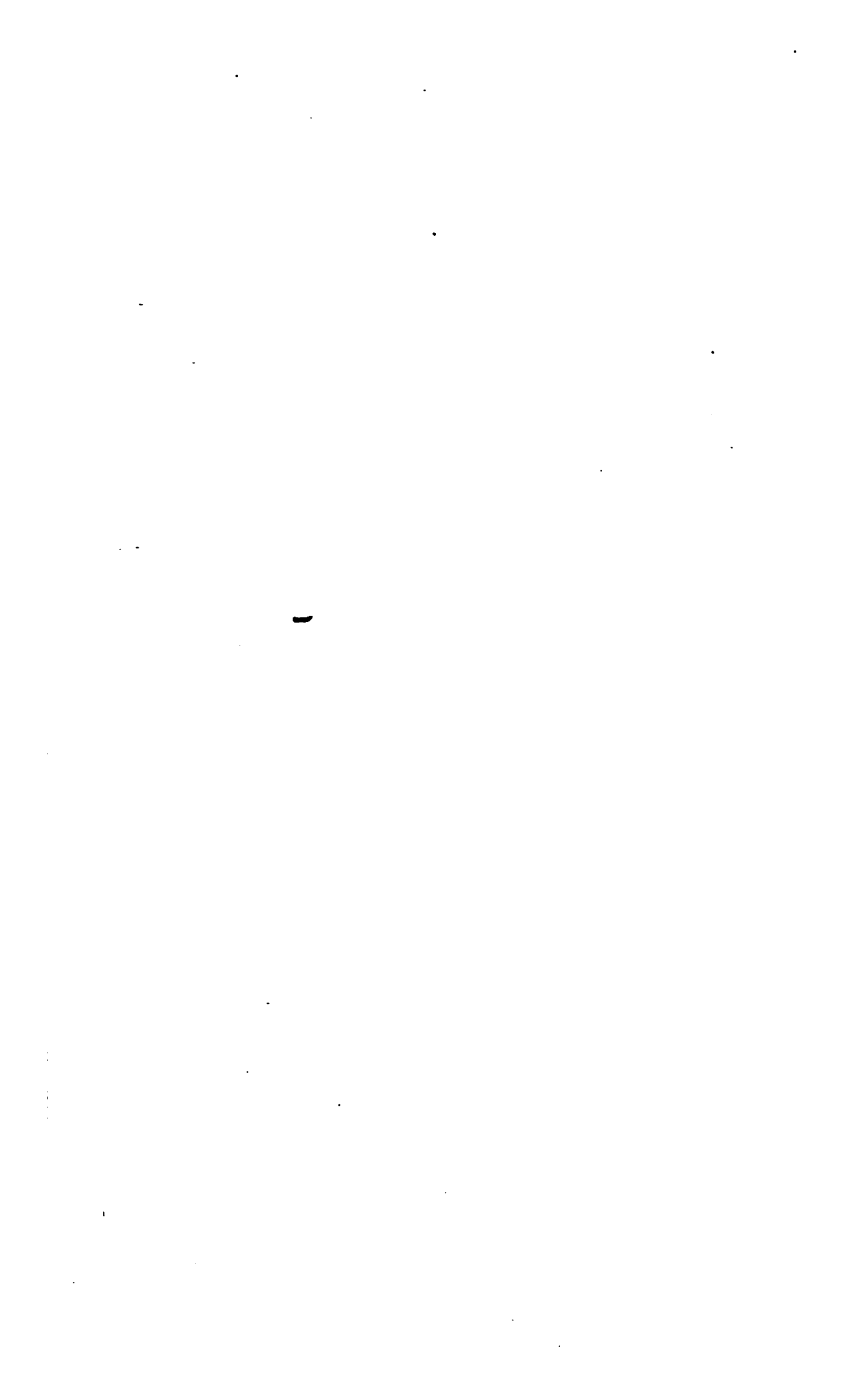
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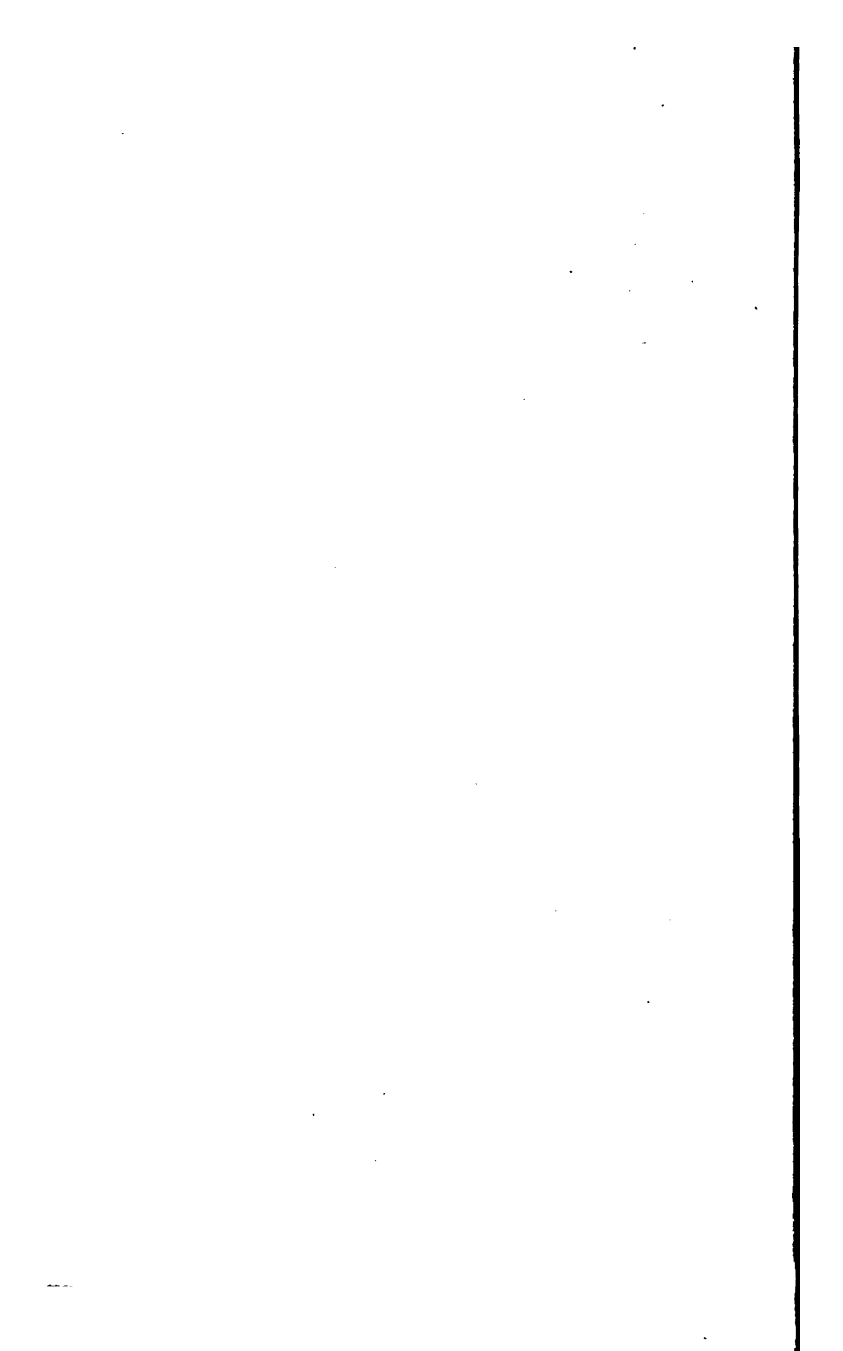
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ESSAYS

AND

TALES IN PROSE.

BY

BARRY CORNWALL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

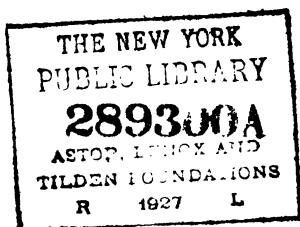
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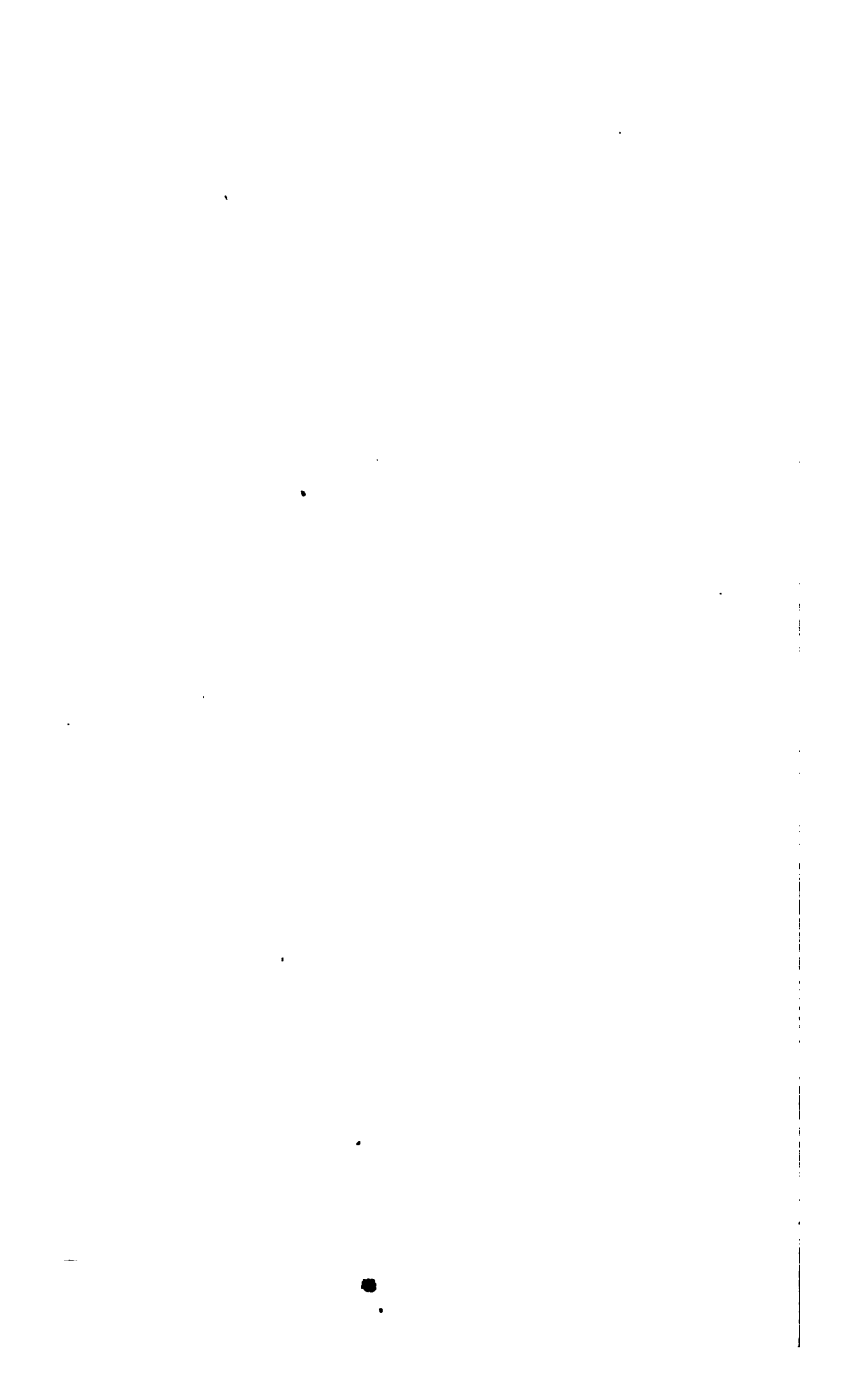
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THE
STORY OF THE BACK-ROOM WINDOW.

WE live in a world of busy passions. Love and hate, sorrow and joy, in a thousand shapes, are for ever near us. Death is at our threshold. Life springs up almost at our feet. Our neighbors are 'exultations, agonies!' And yet we seem to live on, ignorant of all.

Could we but unroof (Asmodeus-like) the houses which, day after day, present towards us so insensible an aspect, what marvels might we not disclose! What fruitful thoughts, what radiant visions, would throng into our brain! The mystery of human conduct would lie unveiled. We should see and know all men truly. We should see the miser, the spendthrift, the scholar, the toiling artisan, the happy bride, and the girl deserted (like the people in the palace of Truth); all contributing their share to the unknown romance, which time is for ever weaving round us. As it is, each of them spins out his little thread, and dies, almost unknown, and soon forgotten; unless some curious accident should arise, to extend his influence into another region, or to hold his 'fame' in suspension,

twenty years after his coffin has been lowered into the dust.

It was some such chance as I have just adverted to, that threw into our knowledge certain facts, regarding a neighboring family, which else had probably slipped very quietly into oblivion. You will observe, that what I am now about to relate is almost literally, *a fact*.

‘Some years ago, we lived, as you know, in B—— Square. The room in which we usually dwelt was at the back of the house. It was spacious, and not without some pretensions to the graceful, the marble chimney-piece being distinguished by a painting of Cipriani, whilst on the ceiling lay scattered some of the conventional elegances of Angelica Kauffman. From the windows which occupied the northern extremity of the room we looked (to the left of a large oriental plane) upon the back of a crescent of houses — the points of the arc receding from us. [I mention these things merely to recall to your mind our precise position.]

‘In the centre of this crescent, was a house which had for a long time been untenanted. Whilst its neighbor dwellings were all busy with life and motion, this only was, for some reason, deserted. We were beginning to speculate on the causes of this accident, and to pity the unhappy landlord, whose pockets were lamenting the lack of rent, when suddenly — it was on an April morning — we perceived, for the first time, signs of change. The windows of the deserted mansion were opened, and workmen were seen bustling about its different rooms. There was an air of preparation, evidently, which announced an incoming tenant.

“Well!” said A——, “at last that unhappy man has discovered some one bold enough to take his haunted house; or perhaps, after all, he is merely endeavoring to decoy the unwary passenger! We shall see.”

‘A few weeks determined the question; for, after the house had been duly cleansed and beautified, and the odor of the paint suffered to fade away, various articles of furniture were brought into the rooms. These were of moderate price, and explained to us that the new tenant was a person of respectable station, but not rich. We began to feel a wish to know “what manner of man” he was. Our interest in the once empty house had received a new impulse; and we looked out, day after day, for the stranger’s arrival.

‘At last a young man, of lively and agreeable presence, was one morning seen giving directions to a female servant, about the disposition of the furniture. This was evidently the master of the mansion. He stayed for half an hour, and then departed; and he repeated his short visit daily. He was probably a clerk in some public office,—a merchant, or professional man, whose time was required elsewhere. But, why did he not reside there? That was a problem that we strove to solve in vain. In the end, he went away altogether.

“Each morn we missed him in th’ accustomed room.”

‘And now no one, except the solitary maid, was seen throwing open the windows in the morning to let in the vernal May; closing them at night; rubbing with a

delicate hand the new furniture; gazing at the unknown neighborhood; or sitting listlessly in the afternoon, "imparadised" in rustic dreams, she appeared to be the sole spirit of the spot. It was not the "*genius loci*" which we had reckoned upon. Our imaginations were not satisfied; and we looked forward confidently to another comer.

'We were not disappointed. After the lapse of a fortnight from the young man's departure, our inquisitive eyes discovered him again. He was sitting at breakfast with a lady by his side. Pretty, young, neat, and attired from head to foot in white, she was evidently a bride. We rushed at once upon this conjecture; and certain tender manifestations, on the husband's leave-taking, confirmed us in our opinion. He went away; and she, left to herself, explored, as far as we could observe, all the rooms of the house. Everything was surveyed with a patient admiration; every drawer opened; the little book-case contemplated, and its slender rows of books all, one by one, examined. Finally, the maid was called up, some inquiries made, and the survey recommenced. The lady had now some one to encourage her open expressions of delight. We could almost fancy that we heard her words—"How beautiful this is! What a comfortable sofa! What a charming screen! How kind, how good, how considerate of ——!" It was altogether a pretty scene.

'Let us pass over the autumn and winter months. During a portion of this time, we ourselves were absent in the country; and when at home, we remember but little of what happened. There was little or no variety

to remark upon; or, possibly, our curiosity had become abated.

‘At last, spring came, and with it came a thousand signs of cheerfulness and life. The plane put forth its tender leaves; the sky grew blue overhead, (even in London;) and the windows of the once melancholy house shone blushing with many flowers. So May passed; and June came on, with its air all rich with roses. But the lady? — Ah! her cheek now waxed pale, and her step grew weak and faltering. Sometimes she ventured into her small garden, when the sun was full upon it. All other times she might be seen wearied with needle-work, or sitting languidly alone; or, when her husband was at home (before and after his hours of business), she walked a little, to and fro, leaning on him for support. His devotion increased with her infirmity. It was curious to observe how love had tamed the high and frolicsome spirit of the man. A joyous and perhaps common manner became serious and refined. The weight of thought lay on him, — the responsibility of love. It is thus that, in some natures, love is wanting to their full development. It raises, and refines, and magnifies the intellect, which else would remain dull, trivial and prostrate. From a seeming barrenness, the human mind springs at once into fertility, — from vagueness into character, — from dullness into vigor and beauty, under the “charming-wand” of love.

‘But let us proceed: —

‘On a glittering night in August, we saw lights flashing about the house, and people hurrying up and

down, as on some urgent occasion. By degrees the tumult subsided; the passings backwards and forwards became less frequent; and at last tranquillity was restored. A single light, burning in an upper window, alone told that some one kept watch throughout the night. The next morning the knocker of the house was (we were told) shrouded in white leather; and the lady had brought her husband a child! We drank to its health in wine.

‘For a few days quiet hung upon the house. But it was doomed speedily to depart. Hurry and alarm came again. Lights were seen once more flickering to and fro. The physician’s carriage was heard. It came, and departed. The maid now held her apron to her eyes. The husband burying his face in his hands, strove (how vainly!) to hide a world of grief. Ere long the bed-room window was thrown open; the shutters of the house were closed, and in a week a hearse was at the door. The mystery was at an end; she was dead!

‘She died! No poet ever wove around her the gaudy tissue of his verse. The grave she sleeps in is probably nothing more than the common mould. Her name even is unknown. But what of this? She lived and died, and was lamented. The proudest can boast of little more. She made the light and happiness of one mortal creature, fond and fragile as herself — and for a name, a tomb? Alas! for all the purposes of love, nothing is wanted save a little earth — nothing but to know the spot where the beloved one rests for ever. We fear, indeed, to give the creature whom we have hoarded in our hearts to the deep and ever-shift-

ing waters,—to the oblivion of the sea! We desire to know *where* it is that we have laid our fading treasure. Otherwise, the pilgrimage is as easy and as painful to the simple church-yard hillock, as to the vault in which a king reposes. The gloomy arches of stately tombs, what are they to the grandeur of the overhanging heavens! and the cold and ghastly marble, how poor and hideous it is, in comparison with the turf whereon many a daisy grows!

‘The child survived. The cares lately exhausted on another, were now concentrated on a little child. The solemn doctors came, and prescribed for it, and took their golden fees. The nurse transferred to it her ready smiles. The services which had been purchased for the mother, were now the property of another claimant. Even the father turned towards it all of his heart which was not in the grave. It was part of her who had strewn sunshine in his path; and he valued it accordingly.

‘But all would not do. A month, “a little month,” and the shutters were again closed. Another funeral followed swiftly upon the last. The mother and her child were again together.

‘From this period a marked change arose in the man’s character. The grief which had bowed him down at his wife’s death, (relieved a little by the care which he bestowed upon her child,) now changed to a sullen or reckless indifference. In the morning he was clouded and oppressed; but at night, a mad and dissonant jollity (the madness of wine) usurped the

place of his early sorrow. His orgies were often carried into morning. Sometimes he drank with wild companions; sometimes he was seen alone, staggering towards the window, stupid and bloated, ere the last light of the autumn sunset concealed him from our sight. There were steadier intervals, indeed, when reflection would come upon him, — perhaps remorse; when he would gaze with a grave (or oftener a sad) look upon the few withered flowers that had once flourished in his gay window. What was he then thinking of? Of vanished hopes and happy hours? Of her patience, her gentleness, her deep untiring love? Why did he not summon up more cheerful visions? Where was his old vivacity? his young and merry spirit? The world offered the same allurements as before, with the exception only of one single joy. Oh! but that was *all*. That was the one hope, the one thought, that had grown vast and absorbed all others. That was the mirror which had reflected happiness a thousand ways. Under that influence the present, the past, the bright to come — all had seemed to cast back upon him the pictures of innumerable blessings. He had trod, even in dreams, upon a sunny shore. And now — !

‘ But why prolong the pain and disgrace of the story? He fell, from step to step. Sickness was on his body; despair was in his mind. He shrank and wasted away, “old before his time;” and might have subsided into a paralyzed cripple or a moody idiot, had not death (for once a friend) come suddenly to him, and rescued him from further misery.

‘ He died, as his wife and child had died before him.

The same signs were there — the unnatural quiet — the closed shutters — and the funeral train. But all, in their time, disappeared ; and in a few weeks workmen came thronging again to the empty house ; the rooms were again scoured — the walls beautified. The same board which two years before had been nailed to the wall, with the significant words "To Let" upon it, was again fixed there. It seemed almost as though the old time had returned again, and that the interval was nothing but a dream.'

And is this all ? Yes, that is all. I wish that I could have crowned my little tale with a brighter ending. But it was not to be. I wish even that I could have made it more heroic, or have developed some grand moral for your use. As it is, it contains little beyond the common threadbare story of human life — first hope, and then enjoyment, and then sorrow — all ending quietly in the grave. It is an ancient tale. The vein runs through man's many histories. Some of them may present seeming varieties — a life without hope or joy — or a career beginning gaily, and running merrily to its close. But this is because we do not read the inner secrets of the soul — the thousand, thousand small pulsations, which yield pain or pleasure to the human mind. Be assured that there is no more an equality or stagnation in the heart, than in the ever-moving ocean.

You will ask me, perhaps, to point out something from which you may derive a profitable lesson. Are you to learn how to regulate your passions ? to arm your heart with iron precepts ? to let in neither too

much love nor sorrow ? and to shut out all despair ? Some wise friend will tell you that you may learn, by precepts, never to lean too much on others ; for that thereby you lose your independent mind. To be the toy of a woman — to rest your happiness on the existence of a fragile girl, whom the breath of the east wind may blow into the dust — it is anything but the act of a wise and prudent man. And to grieve for her after she is dead ! — to sigh for what is irrecoverable ! What can be more useless ? All this can be proved by every rule of logic.

For my part, I can derive nothing for you from my story, except perhaps that it may teach you, like every tale of human suffering, to sympathize with your kind. And this, methinks, is better, and possibly quite as necessary, as any high-wrought or stern example, which shuts the heart up, instead of persuading it to expand ; which teaches prudence instead of love ; and reduces the aim of a good man's life to a low and sordid mark, which all are able, and most of us too well contented, to reach.

We should not commit ourselves to the fields, and inhale the fresh breath of the spring, merely to gain strength to resume our dry calculations, or to inflict hard names upon simple flowers. We should not read the sadness of domestic history, merely to extract some prudent lesson for ourselves. We should open our hearts beneath these great influences, and endeavor to learn that we possess the right, the power, nay, the wish, (though it may sleep,) of doing good to others, to a degree that we little dream of.

So persuaded am I of this truth, that I have invented

a sentence wherein to enshrine it, and I hope that you will not entirely condemn this until you have given it the consideration of a friend. It is this — '*Let but the heart be opened, and a thousand virtues will rush in !*'

1838.

A CHAPTER OF FRAGMENTS.

(BEING A PASSAGE IN THE LIFE OF A PHILOSOPHER.)

.

HERE (if you have no objection) we will leave, for a while, the regular course of our history; for I am able — luckily, I was about to say — to tell you something of this same Baliol, whom I have just adverted to. Take it, by way of episode. Look, where it is, all written down by ‘some person or persons unknown,’ in a clear and somewhat precise hand! You, who are a philosopher, will scarcely object to hear tell of the failings of one of your tribe. The backslidings of a brother sage will make you doubly happy, in the security of your own uprightness. Independently of which, it is sometimes pleasant enough to turn aside from the dusty and fatiguing road, and refresh oneself in some shady recess with a cup of water, or a glance at the hedgerow flowers.

It is thus that the MS. runs: — which, by the way, is not perfect. It is comprised in several slips of paper, and appears to be the result of certain recollections, referring to different periods; or else, if it ever consti-

tuted a regular chain of story, some of the links must have been lost.

And now, you must listen graciously : for a tale's (like a jest's) prosperity, '*lies in the ear.*' —

I.

'At the age of three-and-forty, Baliol was a professor of high reputation. His fame, such as it was, extended beyond the limits of the learned place which he had chosen for his home; and he was not without his admirers in foreign academies. Some of his contemporaries, whose intellectual organs were not adapted to a wide survey of any sort, said, indeed, that Baliol was "too speculative," that he was not "quite orthodox," that he "went too far," &c. &c., and were earnest with him not to introduce "innovations." But these were grave birds of omen, who would fain have settled upon stagnant waters, and have prevented knowledge from ever flowing onward. Baliol was of a more daring spirit; and, venturing upon bold combinations, produced novel and ingenious results.

'Baliol — "Old Baliol," as he was sometimes called by the immature boys who infest the recesses of Oriel and Maudlin — was one of the easiest of men. Absent, careless, (both in his manner and his dress,) and without precision in his gait, he now and then became a mark for ridicule to the slender-witted things that fluttered about his walk, and whom, had he thought it worth while so to do, he could have dissipated in an instant. So much does the mode or manner of a man determine his popularity with superficial observers.

But (besides that, he was well-beloved by his pupils and intimates) there appeared to those who looked deeper, a something at least remarkable in his broad forehead and glittering eye, which many a midnight study had failed to dim. In truth, he wore his years well and gracefully. He was not precisely such as we figure to ourselves, the "*imberbis Apollo*;" yet his step was firm, — even elastic; and Time, for once honoring wisdom, had forborne to plant a wrinkle on his brow, which was singularly clear and open. We have said that he was an "easy" man; yet there was in him a fierce and unrelenting power of indignation, which things more than usually mean, or oppressive, had been known to raise up. But this had scarcely ever happened, — once — perhaps twice in his quiet life, and was forgotten. He was now, therefore, seen tranquil, unaffected and easily to be pleased; and was regarded with something like contempt accordingly.

‘He had dwelt at college for the last five-and-twenty years; scarcely ever leaving it, except for a yearly journey to London, when the death of some collector and the sale of curious books attracted him to a noisy coffee-house in London. Upon these occasions, he was soon satisfied; seeing little indeed beyond the auction-room which held the books that he had come to purchase; unless he happened to diversify his visit by a stroll through Covent Garden, or a peep at the new pantomime. In every case he rejoiced to return, as speedily as possible, to his untiring studies at —.

‘Baliol was a learned and an intellectual man; yet sickness surprised him at last in the midst of his Hellenic researches, and compelled him to try the efficacy of

idleness and travel. He was recommended "to change the scene." This, which is usually a refuge of the last resort, was in his case seasonable counsel; for his physician was honest and he himself was a tractable patient. He went to Paris, and entered with some curiosity, at least, if not with much spirit, into the amusements before him. The busy congregations which assemble there, to worship the goddess of many shapes, — the "votaries of Pleasure," as our moral treatises call them, — attracted his wondering attention. The quick apprehension and ready intellect of the people astonished him, who had drawn his slow and grave conclusions from books and meditation only. The liveliness and amenity of their manners, the grace of their recreations, and the agreeable self-possession of both sexes, surprised and pleased him. He was a wise man and despised nothing.

'Once within the whirl of the busy capital, Baliol was resolved to let nothing pass unseen. The vicious as well as the virtuous formed a subject for his scrutiny. We do not learn to know what a world is breathing and struggling round us, by hiding our heads like the ostrich. We must *dare* — in knowledge as in battle — in order to conquer. Accordingly, Baliol entered into the dens, and hovels, and saloons of Paris. From the lair of the wild beast and the beggar, to the palace of the gamester, he omitted nothing. The dice rattled in his hands, the red and black tables held his gold. He lost, and won, and lost, — with a smile, indeed; yet not with that perfect equanimity which should belong to a philosopher. On the contrary, although the stake was not important, he felt an increased pulsation about

the region of his heart, which told him that all was not as quiet as when he was in company with his ancient books. There was a creeping in his blood, a nervous sensation in his limbs, which were new to him. He had courage to examine the cause; and, satisfied of his danger, he at once abandoned the harlot, Fortune, for ever.

‘From Paris he journeyed to Rome, — to Naples; coasted the Adriatic; visited Germany. He ascended mountains, and could boast of having stood face to face even with the chamois; of having looked down upon the wild eagle, “sweeping the mid-air in majestic circles,” from regions of eternal snow.

II.

‘At length, tired with travel, and discontented even with variety itself, (which, after all, never satisfies a masculine ambition,) Baliol returned home. His return was, indeed, hastened by the arrival of an express, announcing the death of a relation, by whose intestacy an estate of considerable value devolved on him. On reaching England, his first inclination led him to his old rooms in — College, where he made a short stay; after which, as a matter of duty, he proceeded to inspect his new estate. It consisted of about 1200 acres of land, in one of the midland counties, and its rental, (some £1500 a year, or thereabouts,) when added to his own paternal fortune, and the sum that he had amassed by twenty years’ tuition, made him, for a bachelor, a wealthy man.

‘There was a moderate residence on the estate,

which was known by the name of the Manor House, consisting of a low, irregular building of grey stone, built at different periods. It was neither classic, nor Gothic, nor Saracenic; but one of those doubtful piles (reared by various hands) which are unable to claim alliance with any "order." There was a long hall, traversing the house, and leading from the forecourt to the two large gardens behind, in the first of which (walled all round, and rich in vines and peach-trees,) was a vast grass-plat, having a majestic walnut tree in the centre, and in other parts two or three mulberry trees stooping with age. From the windows of the small parlor, which Baliol selected for his ordinary use (a small room opening to the south), he overlooked the gardens, and also the river and grassy valley beyond, from which the pleasant sound of the sheep-bell could easily be heard at evening.

'Had Baliol never travelled, it is probable that he might have brought his library hither, and at once have shut himself up amongst his books; but the leisure which he found it necessary to resort to, had turned his thoughts into other channels. Objects presented themselves to his view, which he had never before remembered. The shapes and colors of things forced themselves upon him, and exacted his admiration. He began to discover that there was, in the world wherein he lived, a multitude of things, quite as worthy of his observation as learned books. It seemed almost as though the walls of his study had given way, and let in the vast wonders of nature. His vision became active — excursive. Thoughts, which had once grown up slowly, and sometimes painfully, amidst abstract

subjects, now arose and drew food from the shapes and hues before him. They became more genial; resolving themselves sometimes into an analysis of his own sensations, sometimes into wishes or speculations touching the good and evil of the human world around him. We do not grow benevolent amidst science. Pleasure, whatever may be said of it, does not always confine itself to mere self-indulgence, but wanders out into sympathy, charity, heroism, by curious and sometimes imperceptible steps.

‘Baliol did not abandon his ancient studies; but he followed them moderately, and at intervals. Books of a more amusing character occasionally engrossed him — the poets, and novelists, and essayists of his own country. He became interested in his fruit-trees; he watched the opening of his flowers. He took into his hands some thirty acres of meadow-land, and became a proprietor of cattle, and a prophet of the weather. His garden especially delighted him; and the books which he took there after breakfast frequently remained unopened on the rustic table of the arbor. Instead of a sublime conference with Eschylus, he would question Simon, his old gardener, as to the succession of his vegetables, or the well-doing of his espaliers.

‘The simplicity of a man conversant only with books, sometimes expands into a philosophical admiration over ordinary objects, which they who are familiarized with such things rarely feel. To the clown, the daisy which he treads upon is no better than a common weed. A weed! Is not a weed as wonderful as a flower — as wonderful as one of the bright orbs of heaven? The pure, colorless, tasteless

water—the infinite air—are they not subjects for gratitude and unbounded wonder? And yet, they pass in the list of common things, for which no thanks are owing. Baliol admired everything, for everything was novel to him; and moralized each “into a hundred similes.”

III.

‘The predecessor of Baliol had been a Mr. Stuart, a bachelor. A few years before his death, he had taken into his house a female, and, as it was supposed, her daughter; and by these he had been managed in a manner that excited the disgust of all the squirearchy round. From having been a jolly neighbor, fond of his “cheerful glass,” a hunter as bold as Nimrod—in a word, a man fit to mate with the merriest at Castle Rackrent—he grew prudent, sober, reserved; and hated accordingly. Who the widow was whom he had taken as an inmate, was never known; but it was surmised that the girl was related to him; that she was his niece,—or nearer. The question had formed an interesting subject of debate to many a country gossip, but had never been properly solved. It was clear, however, that Mr. Stuart was a man mightily deceived, and oppressed by the ungrateful objects of his bounty. This circumstance was vouched for even by Mr. Snare himself, the attorney, and agent, and factotum of the late misused owner. Baliol was, therefore, satisfied as to the fact; and he was glad, to say truth, that the two females had quitted the manor-house before he arrived. Whither they had gone, he had not inquired. They had left the scene of their tyranny, and it was well;

for Baliol began to feel a something akin to dislike growing up in his breast towards them, and Mr. Snare (who had been once an admirer of Mary Sumner) nourished his antipathy upon all occasions.

‘Things had gone thus far at the house of Baliol, when, on a bright May morning, whilst he was examining some annotations on one of the Greek plays, his servant entered abruptly and announced that a woman wished to speak with him. Baliol ordered her to be admitted, and she was thereupon ushered in; and, in compliance with a motion of his hand, sat down whilst he proceeded to finish the paragraph that he had been engaged upon. Having done this, he raised his eyes, and saw a small elderly woman gazing steadily upon him. She was dressed poorly, but her face was intelligent and open; and her manner, when he addressed her, beyond that of a common villager.

“‘You wished to speak with me,” Baliol began; “what is it that you are desirous to say?”

““My name is Sumner,” answered she.

‘Baliol’s countenance darkened; a frown, an unusual visitor, settled upon his brow, as he replied in a severe tone, “I have heard of your name before. Now for your wish?”

‘The woman was staggered for a moment at this reception, but she collected herself without much difficulty.

““For myself, Sir, I have nothing to ask; but for another — a young girl — my child — I must do my duty, and ask, — first, if she is not entitled to some benefit under Mr. Stuart’s will?”

“He died intestate,” said Baliol, shortly.

“But he sent a letter to you, Sir, shortly before his death, recommending this young girl to your care?”

“Never!” was the brief reply.

“God help her, then!” said the woman, rising, and sighing deeply; “for her doom is that of the beggar!”

She courtesied respectfully to Baliol, and moved to depart; but her step was less firm than when she entered, and she did not readily find the door of the room; perhaps there were some tears in her eyes.

‘If the widow was disheartened by the interview, Baliol was greatly dissatisfied. He had taken a grave thing upon trust: he had condemned two persons — females, helpless, penniless, — without the semblance of a trial; and now he had been confronted by one of them. Was he satisfied with his judgment? Alas! no. There is in the forehead of Truth, a stamp and a sign, which no forgery can ever master. Imperfectly as we are able to decipher the subtle characters, their effect is undoubted upon us.

“I will see more of these people, before I determine against them,” said Baliol to himself; and, following up this resolution, he did not allow a second day to intervene before he took his way to the widow’s cottage.

‘It was a small and poor dwelling, at the extremity of the village, and had been resorted to as the readiest place for refuge on the death of Mr. Stuart: at which time his *protégées* were ejected, with formal civility, by his agent before mentioned. Baliol knocked against

the door, which was opened by his yesterday's visitor. He entered, and beheld a small room, scantily and humbly furnished; with more taste indeed than is usual in the huts of laborers, but scarcely with more magnificence. The widow had been occupied by some household work, which she put down on Baliol's entrance, and, turning round, said to a young girl, whose head hung busily over some needle-work, "Here is Mr. Baliol, my love!"

'The girl raised her eyes — large, dark, melancholy eyes — and bent slightly, almost proudly, towards him. He was stung by that grave reproach.

' "This is your daughter, Mrs. Sumner?"

' "I call her so, Sir," was the answer; "but she is my niece. Her mother died at nineteen — she was no more, Sir; and left her child (then a few months old) to the mercy of the world."

' "Had she no father?" asked Baliol, the spirit of curiosity overcoming his other feelings.

' "Did you ever hear of the late Mr. Stuart's elder brother, Sir? His name was Ronald. He lived long enough to bring ruin and death upon my poor sister Mary; and then — he was shot through the heart in Spain. My child here is his daughter."

' "I am *your* daughter, mother," said the girl, rising and folding her arms round her friend; "you have been father and mother to me!"

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IV.

‘From early May to the close of August, is but four little months; yet, in that petty space of time, how many things may be hidden — how much may be won and lost! It was scarcely four months since Baliol had first called at the widow’s cottage; yet a great change had taken place in the relation of the parties. The distance which originally had existed between them became lessened, and finally disappeared. Their acquaintance had rapidly matured into intimacy. Baliol found the aunt a sensible and reflecting woman, and the niece — dowered with a thousand charms! Her beauty, if not always obvious to common eyes, was, at least, of a rare order; and her figure — just entering on womanhood — was modelled with infinite beauty. Her countenance was serious, — perhaps touched with a tender melancholy; but the painful expression which had clouded her brow formerly, had now worn off, and the large luminous orbs shone full of gratitude and respect upon him. She had become the pupil of the philosopher.

“I scarcely know what I should have done without your songs, Mary,” said he; “or your flowers, or your pretty talk.”

“You are very good, Sir,” answered she, “to bear with our ignorance. I am often afraid that we — with our vulgar wonder at everything, and our little bits of common knowledge, picked up from the garden or the fields — must appear so insignificant to you. You give us so much, and get so little in return.”

‘Baliol shook his head. “I begin to think,” said

he, smiling, "that your 'common knowledge,' as you call it, is as good — 'faith, almost better, than that which I have wasted my life in gathering. But, be that as it may, I am more than content with the barter."

'And so, the man of learning proceeded to cultivate the mind of the village girl; which grew, and expanded, and blossomed out beneath his care. He gave her books, proposed problems, discussed questions of various sorts, and rewarded her, at the conclusion of each lesson, with his applause. She had a quick and healthy intellect, and made swift progress in the art of thinking; and, in the course of no long time, Baliol was anxious that she should even approve his own opinions. Nay, he was desirous that she should not think meanly of his person; and, with this view, he began to pay attention to his dress. This, which is usually set down to the score of vanity, is often, as it was in this case, the result of a feeling akin to modesty. It is an endeavor to eke out, by external ornaments, the deficiency which we imagine to exist in ourselves.

'It was impossible not to admire a pupil, at once so lovely and intelligent. Baliol's position was dangerous. It required all the help that he could obtain from Plato and Aristotle, and the rest of his friends the Greeks, to enable him to meet the peril. Even chain and plate armor are poor defences against the arrows shot from the eye of beauty. What, then, can be expected from simple books? There is no knowing how far things might have gone, had not Baliol been called suddenly to London. The business was urgent — no less than the life of a long-trying friend being in jeopardy;

and he therefore set out on the instant. "Do not fail to write to me, Mary," said he at parting, "and tell me what progress you make."

.
'A month after he had left the manor-house, the following letter, addressed to "Stuart Baliol, Esq., London," reached him at his hotel in Brook Street : —

"You have been away a long time, my dear master. Is it a month? Yes, it is only a month. Yet, it seems — oh, how much longer!

"You have desired to know what I do in your absence. Sir, I follow carefully all your directions, as regularly as though you yourself were here. I read the books you pointed out. I try to cultivate my little talents, in order to gain a smile from you on your return.

"I do not know how it is, but the studies which I thought would entirely employ me, and shut out weariness and melancholy, have not had the effect that you foretold. I am not happier than formerly; perhaps, even, I am less content. All this is very ungrateful, my dear master; but your poor pupil is a wayward child, and has yet many a hard lesson to learn, before she can do credit to your care.

"Dear Sir, why do you not come back? And yet, how foolish is such a question! for you may have much still to keep you away. And what can our dull village boast of, to make you amends for the charms and gaieties of London?

"I have nursed the flowers that you admired. Some of them have thriven very much. I wish that

you could see them. But the cold weather is near, and they will have withered before you return. I have tried often to recollect if there was any other thing that I could do for you, but I could remember nothing.

“ Sir, very respectfully,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ MARY SUMNER.”

‘ Baliol read the letter with an eager eye ; and the color had not left his cheek when, on arriving at the conclusion, he laid it softly on the table near him. After a pause, he rose, and took a few turns across the room ; and finally seized a book, and began busily to run over its pages. But the subject did not appear attractive ; or it did not suit the humor of the moment. He took up the letter again. He bestowed upon it a second and more careful perusal. “ She improves in writing,” said he. “ The letters in ‘ dear master ’ are elegantly formed ; and some of the phrases, even, are turned prettily enough, for a girl of her condition.” Condition ! Ah, that word — which seems to open an untraversable space between the loved and the lover ! Oh, if the god Cupid had not his heavenly wings, in what a petty and narrow confine would he not wear out his divine life !

‘ It need not be said that Baliol replied, speedily and kindly, to this letter ; or that he made ample provision for the comfort of his *protégées*. The letters, however, (for there were more than one,) never reached their destination. Being sent, with papers of business, to the agent, Snare, they were detained purposely in that person’s office, for some time, and were finally lost.

‘Meantime the months of autumn rolled heavily on. The winter darkened ; and frost and rain, those evil ministers who keep sway over the earth by turns, did not forget the obscure village of H ——. Mary Sumner, hitherto full of hope, grew discontented and querulous ; and eventually sank into that settled languor, bordering on despondency, which so frequently falls upon the over-sanguine and the young. Her kind preceptor and friend had, apparently, forgotten her. Of what use were her books ? To what purpose could she cultivate her flowers ? — when he who had presided so graciously over her pursuits, and had rewarded her with his approbation was no longer there ?

“ ‘He was like a father to you, Mary,’ said her aunt.

“ ‘He was very kind,’ was the reply.

“ ‘I did not think that he would have forgotten us so soon,’ resumed the elder : “we were foolish to reckon upon the friendship of a gentleman so much above us.”

“ ‘We were, indeed, foolish,” responded Mary, in a low voice : “but that is now over : and we must look at the world anew.”

‘It is not often that the neglect of fathers occasions so much repining. But the benevolence of Baliol exceeded the common measure ; and his pupil had a grateful heart.

‘In regard to our philosopher, he was sufficiently uncomfortable. That he received no acknowledgment for his bounty did not occur to him ; but that he should hear nothing in return to his several letters mortified him deeply. It was this, in all probability, rather than

the various causes to which he attributed his stay, that kept him so long in town, after the original motive that had carried him there had ceased to operate. He heard nothing of the widow or her niece; and he forbore to make inquiry. The letters which came occasionally from his agent, referred solely to matters of business. At last, in one of them he read the following paragraph:—

“By the way, the girl whom you used to notice here Sir, has fallen sick. I understand that she was for some time engaged to a certain young man of this neighborhood, by name Robert Emerson,—a handsome fellow, and a great vanquisher of women’s hearts. He is well to do; but he is too prudent, if I know him rightly, to choose a wife without money. It is not difficult to foresee the termination of this romance.”

“Soh!” said Baliol, when he had finished reading this bitter news; “and this is the cause of her silence! Want of fortune, however, shall not mar her prospects, if she loves this man.”

‘If she loves him,—a brilliant doubt! First, he would satisfy himself on this point, and then let Fate have her way. Should she intrust the management of this delicate inquiry to his agent, Snare? No; he would once more venture within the witch’s circle, and force the secret from herself.

V.

‘With four horses harnessed to his chariot, Baliol was soon at H——. During his journey, indeed, he had leisure to start and run down a hundred speculations.

Doubt after doubt arose, and would not disappear before the most strenuous efforts of his reason. Alas, for reason! That great faculty which our wise ones tell us is the all in all here, — before which imagination itself is to pale and finally dissolve, — what can it do, when the state of man is troubled? when fever is within him, or a tempest of accidents around? Does it not almost seem, that in times when it is most wanted, the great faculty of the philosophers is useless?

‘In the mean time, the carriage flew rapidly along, and Baliol arrived eventually at the manor-house. He was not expected. His own rooms were shut up, half disfurnished, and redolent of damp. His housekeeper and her colleagues were absent at a village party; his gardener was chirping, cricket-like, at the merry hearth of the Checquers. No one remained, save a dull country girl, hired or borrowed for the occasion, to “take care” of the property, and defend it from the incursions of strangers.

‘The evening was delightful; for it had been one of those balmy days of April, in which the sun, and the glistening showers, contending for mastery, seem to strive which shall do most for their beautiful charge, the earth. Yet, to Baliol’s eyes all looked solitary; lowering, disconsolate. His spirit sank within him; and he felt — as men afflicted by hypochondriasis often do — gloomy and prostrate, before the charming and tranquillizing influence of the setting sun.

‘After intimating that he should sleep at the manor-house that night, he walked forward to the widow’s home; entered it unannounced, as he was wont to do;

and found himself at once in the presence of her he sought.

‘She was alone, and was tying up a tress of her glossy hair, which had fallen down. Upon seeing him, she started up. Her mouth, half opened, seemed as though she was about to speak — but she forebore ; and, pressing her temples with her hands (which manifestly trembled), she sat down again, in silence. As Baliol gazed upon her, an irresistible feeling of admiration for a thing so fair, stole into his mind, and softened the sternness of his countenance. And, indeed, with her form bent forward so modestly towards him ; with her eyes (those “large dark” and once more “melancholy eyes”) cast sadly down ; and her cheeks flushed by some powerful emotion ; she deserved to have had a painter, equal to the task, to rescue so beautiful a picture from oblivion.

‘Gradually, the blood faded from her face ; and then Baliol had leisure to remark that she must have suffered greatly from illness. She was pale, and thin ; far beyond what he had imagined. In his ordinary mood, he would have cursed himself for assailing with a syllable of reproach, a creature so touched by sorrow ; but *now* — his own wild disappointed passions intervened, and marred the gentleness of his nature. It was necessary to account for his visit ; and therefore — scarcely knowing what he said — he burst at once into the middle of the subject :—

“‘Soh, — you are in love, Miss Sumner ?”

“‘Sir ?” said she, startled, yet somewhat stately.

“‘I mean,” resumed Baliol, “that you are admired — beloved, by a person of this place ; and that your

marriage is postponed — abandoned, for want of fortune, Be at ease! *I* am here, — to aid you. I have come hither for that sole purpose. You shall not go to the arms of your husband, a beggar. Your dowry is in my hands; and I am ready to pay it."

"The face of the poor villager betrayed wonder; but, after a little pause, she answered, — slowly but tremulously, "Whenever I go — if I *ever* go (an unlikely thing) to the — the home of any man, I shall go — as you say, Sir, — just the beggar that I now am."

"Do not use such terms, Mary," said he, reproachfully.

"I follow your words, Sir," replied she.

"But this young man," persisted her interrogator, "what is his name? — Robert ———?"

"She smiled, when he arrived at the name, almost bitterly. Baliol, who did not notice the quality of the smile, felt irritated at her fancied exultation, and with his breath pent up, — like one bound on a desperate question, implicating life and death, — he retorted on her quickly — "You love him, then?"

"I — *hate* him," said she, with energy. "He has intruded himself upon me; he has insulted me; and now, as it seems, he has belied me."

'So young and so untender?'

said Baliol: yet his eye brightened as he spoke; his hands, which had been clenched and contracted, relaxed; and he breathed once more freely. After a few moments' pause, he rose, opened the window of the cottage, and gazed for a time on the quiet scene before him. "It is a lovely evening," said he: but the tone

of his voice was uneven. He was evidently in great agitation — forming rapidly and as rapidly abandoning a variety of plans of conduct. It seemed, however, as if none had satisfied him; for he returned to his seat fuller of embarrassment than before.

“Mary,” said he, — and paused. She looked up to him, gently, timidly. “Mary, there is some person whom you love; and — I must know him. Do not deny it,” continued he, seeing that she was about to speak, “but hear me. I have a right to be heard; for I have given you, Mary, — as much as a man can give.”

“I am most grateful, Sir,” — she was proceeding; but he checked her.

“Peace!” said he, with a faint smile. “I do not refer to the poor trifles which you have so kindly accepted — a part, after all, of my superfluities; but of a thing of more value — of value, at least, to *me*. I have given you more than you can ever repay, Mary: for the only thing that could have requited me (and it would have done so a thousandfold) you have lavished on another.”

“You perplex me, Mr. Baliol,” said she; but he took no notice of her observation, and continued —

“You have strewn ashes in my path, Mary. I came here, happy — tranquil at least; and I depart — a melancholy man.”

“What is it that you mean, Sir?” inquired she. Her eyes expanded; and she spoke anxiously — eagerly.

“I mean,” said he, in a voice soft and deep from exceeding tenderness — “I mean that I *love* you,

Mary — dearly — ay, like my own soul. Am I not a fool to confess this ? for, of what avail can it be ? Do you not despise me — hate me ? ”

“ Dear Sir,” said she ; but he was absorbed by his feelings, and interrupted her —

“ It was weak, indeed — it was mad, absurd, to dream that you, in the first bloom of life — rich in hope, in youth, in beauty — could neglect those like yourself, and stoop to *me*, — me, a poor bookworm — a recluse, with the weight almost of half a century upon me ! I confess it all. Nevertheless, when I am gone — and I shall soon go — think of me sometimes, Mary — kindly, if you can — ”

‘ He was proceeding in a strain of passionate despair — no longer struggling to restrain his emotions, but abandoning himself to the power of the passion that consumed him — when he felt a small soft hand forced gently *within* his own ! In an instant the tempest ceased. The Halcyon is not a fable ! He turned his eyes upon the fair girl beside him, (whose gaze he had till then avoided,) and beheld those dark orbs, that he had so often loved to look upon, bent — with an expression which none could mistake — full upon him. A new agitation now assailed him.

“ You pity me, then, Mary ? ”

‘ She sighed. “ I do not give my hand from pity,” said she.

“ A word — a word ? ” petitioned he ; and he drew her, not unwilling, near him.

“ What more is there to tell ? ” was her soft answer. “ Dear Mr. Baliol, if my love is all that you seek, it has been yours — longer than I dare to tell you ! ”

“ A kiss,

Long as his exile, sweet as his revenge,”

rewarded the proud Roman, as he trod once again within sight of the Capitol. So the kiss which followed the last syllable of the tender villager, told how entirely her lover felt requited for all his troubles past. A few words were not wanting — exclamations of delight — protestations — gratitude — promises of endless, endless love — from him : from *her* — murmured half-distinct sentences (so murmurs the honey-bee) — all full of meaning to the ear of love, but not to be translated to alien spirits.

‘ Besides, we are true biographers. We will not betray a syllable, detracting from the merit of our hero. A philosopher should not be wholly unveiled to common eyes ; but should live — magnified, indeed, yet half hidden, in the misty light of his renown — an object at once of respect and wonder.’

. . . And here, reader, let us leave, to their own retiring happiness, Baliol and his bride. For that they were happy, do not doubt. Above all, do not found your scepticism, if it exist, upon any *disparity* of age or station. The historians of Love have never fully understood their subject ; or, they have traced imperfectly the origin of this the most wonderful of all the passions. Equality may belong to Friendship ; but *inequality* constitutes the essence of Love. It is that which marries the strong to the weak — the rough and courageous soldier to the fair and timid maid. It was that which linked ‘ the lovely lady ’ to ‘ the Moor,’ the Thane of Cawdor to his awful wife. Some secret

sympathy or resemblance there may be, which allies hearts to each other ; but there is a dissimilarity or difference also, which is not without its attraction. Some day or other, when you and I have more leisure than at present, we will try to resolve the problem.

1839.

THE USHER.

'Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry for thee yet.' — *Lear*.

THE world is full of teachers. From the full-blown doctor, head of his college, — or from the high-pensioned pedant, hard, pompous, and dogmatical, — down to the button-holder who gives you his advice for nothing (its precise value), you may reckon a hundred varieties. These are, for the most part, the pride of classic ground — that over-cultivated region, in which so many a sickly flower and parasite plant are nourished, — where little is taught in many words, — where the art of rising in the world takes place of all other arts, — where the line of demarcation, between the high and the low, is made plain to the meanest capacities, — where every one learns to imitate the vices of his neighbor, and to no one is recommended the counsel of — '*Know Thyself*.'

Amongst the most prosperous teachers, may be enumerated the masters of public schools — of well-endowed grammar-schools — the pedagogues of select academies — graduates who 'prepare gentlemen for the *two* universities' — fellows of college who cram the

dunce for his degree — private tutors of all principles, ages, shades, and colors — of all humors also ; from the solemn coxcomb, whom conceit makes stiffer than a poker, to the toad-eater whom self-interest renders as supple as a cane. But peace be with them all ! Although their roots are (or were) in the earth, yet they bloom high above us. The object of our search is a natural production found in a lower stratum — one that, like the truffle, never peeps above ground. In a word, it is — THE USHER.

And who is the Usher ?

The Usher is a man of low degree. He is the gentlest of his family. The rest have bones and sinews, the fronts of bullocks, the fierceness of bulldogs ; but he, poor fellow ! has been ailing from his cradle, and has nothing for his portion, save an active and imaginative brain. His brothers are tillers of the ground, farmers, shopkeepers, clerks, mechanics, useful members of society. They mingle with the crowd, and are ‘of it ;’ learn how the world is moving ; how trades or factions prosper or decline. They return at intervals to their home, full of cheap acquirements ; busy, chattering, shining characters ; thinly lackered over with conversational knowledge ; prouder than thieves of their mosaic gold. They eat heartily, laugh heartily, are irresistible amongst women, and good fellows amongst men. They have the mark of good-luck upon them, and are sure of success. In the mean time, *he* — the humblest of his race — dwells apart, silent, forgotten. He is deemed by all the black sheep of the flock ; and, indeed, he is melancholy and inactive ; does little ; earns nothing. However, his

appetite is small — so small that his father scarcely grudges the morsel that he eats; except that now and then it is delicate also, and then he is told, that people who do no work are not entitled to be 'nice' in their tastes. Being left to solitude, he borrows for his amusement a few books, meditates, ventures to form an opinion or two, but keeps them, wisely, to himself. For the most part of the year he is the inmate of the chimney-corner; but sometimes (in summer time) he crawls abroad with his stick, and gathers a few of the hedge-row flowers; or else, he lies down on the little patch of grass near his parents' cottage, like a beggar in the sun.

Alas, for the young worshipper of literature — the poor book-worm and genius of the family! What a melancholy future lies before him! He has neither cunning nor wealth to uphold him — scarcely industry in the common phrase, for he cannot adapt his intellect to all purposes. The merely clever boy has his wits at his fingers' ends — is prepared for any demand — a declamation, an epigram, a theme, a slander, or an eulogy. Such a one can accommodate himself ('accommodate is a good word') to anything. His conscience is free, or rather, he has no conscience, but simply an elastic humor, that can shrink or extend itself, like the body of the snake. But the book-worm — *he* (like Cassio) has a soul to be saved; he cannot be all things to all men, nor lie away the life of another for an ounce of copper. It is not difficult to prophesy their several fortunes. Could we pull down 'the blanket of the dark,' we should behold, in one, an editor, prosperous and without principle, pandering to

the passions of the high or the low — the propagator of false doctrines — the mercenary of the army of Cant — doing dirty things for base bribes, or hiding his envy or his malice behind a vizor of ass's skin or a mask of brass. In the other, we might see the poor prose author, on whose brain (coined into drachmas) the bookseller dines sumptuously every day; or the poorer poet; or the usher, struggling for his bitter bread.

But we must take things in their order. Before our hero can become an usher, he must pass through the probationary troubles of boyhood. He was, as we say, a sickly child; but he grows in some wise, out of the ailments of his infancy, and gives promise at last of becoming a man. He is not likely to rise in the usual way: but he is suspected now of being not altogether without a brain; and, therefore, it is by his brain that he must learn to live. He is sent to school. A few 'natural tears' he sheds on leaving his home; but these are soon dried. In truth, he has little to lament. The old dog, indeed, who prefers him to all the world, and who, perhaps, may not live till he returns at the Christmas holydays, is his friend. He takes leave of him with swollen eyes. They — the two — have worn away many an hour together — many a day. They have fed together — slept together. It is a grievous parting, this from his old companion. But it is written down in the book of Fate that the boy must depart, and he goes accordingly to the detested school.

His school-days may be disposed of in a single paragraph; for at school he is much like other boys: less boisterous, perhaps; more studious; and (from his

incapacity for the stronger exercises) more solitary. He is not great at foot-ball, nor at hockey ; but he can bowl down the middle stump of the wicket, and at rackets he is not to be despised. And, although not strong, he has a spirit within him. He will fight against desperate odds, against greater skill and greater strength ; and, more than all, against the applause of a circle of critics shouting for his rival, a tyrant long accustomed to conquer. At last, for weight and skill must prevail, our solitary is struck down senseless. But he has fought a good fight ; and the urchins, who met to mock him, are compelled to own that ' there is pluck in the peasant. There — that will do, Grimes. He shan't fight any more. He is a devilish good bit of stuff. Take him away.' And he is taken away thereupon. He has lost a battle ; but he has achieved renown. The respect of his colleagues follows him, and his school-life is tranquil afterwards.

Five or six years passed at school render him familiar with many problems. He demonstrates readily things which, at first sight, seemed insuperable. He has mastered Latin : he has plunged deep into Greek. He is a tolerable mathematician ; and (it is a private vice) he occasionally addicts himself to verse. The books which are lent out by the master during leisure hours lead him into flowery paths. Shakspeare is there, Milton, Jeremy Taylor, the Essayists, some of the works of Cervantes and Le Sage, and odd volumes of plays and poetry. Here is food for dreams ! By the time that he arrives at the age of seventeen years, he is something like a man in intellect. His frame is still somewhat fragile ; but his mind is keen, active, robust.

His eyes are quick and glittering, eager, restless, or at times lifted up 'in holy meditation, fancy free,' to the stars and the unfathomed heavens—to regions where the Muse of Poetry hides, to be drawn down by—is it not possible?—himself! He has a rapt and abstracted look; but at intervals he utters shrewd things or lofty maxims; is philosophical, worldly-wise in theory, or transcendental, as the humor varies. His friends begin to respect him. His father feels an unknown pride dawning upon him: he is proud of possessing such a son. People say that his mind is above his years. And to prove this, he falls in—love! Poor wretch! What's Eleanore to him, or he to Eleanore? And yet he casts himself into the wild billows of passion—to struggle, suffer, and, perhaps, drown at last. In the mean time, however, all is not dark—for he can dream! The 'ivory gate' is opened even to the humblest; and within its portals he can now discover wonders beyond the riches of Maugraby or Aladdin—wonders that present themselves in a thousand different aspects—hours, and days, and years of unalloyed delight; and, in the midst of all, Her, the queen and pageant of his dreams—the star and cynosure, by whose steadfast light he hopes to steer his frail barque past Fortunate Islands, and through summer seas, far away into the dim perspective—ay, even to that calm eternal haven, where all weary voyagers pause and are at rest!

But now comes the time when he must act and not dream,—when the student is to be a student no longer. He is about to migrate, to soar. He is no more (as Lingo says exultingly) to be a scholar, but a 'master

of scholars.' The student becomes — an usher. Like Bottom, he is transformed. The transition is like a change to the tropics. It is a step such as Cæsar took when he passed the Rubicon. But lately, and he had his father's arm to hold by; *now* he must stand alone. He goes, in effect, into an unexplored country; without chart or compass. He has assumed a character in the world:—let us see how he prospers.

First, he is introduced to the master of the school. He knocks at the 'Academy' gate. After some delay, a footman (pulling on a striped jacket) opens the door. Our usher hesitates; and the slovenly menial measures him with a calculating eye, looks coldly at him, and finally half-inclines his ear to learn his wants. The usher's name and business are declared, and he is admitted, cautiously, into — the kitchen. There he waits, while the servant proceeds into the parlor and announces that a 'person who calls himself Mayne, — the new usher, — is in the kitchen. Is he to come in?' An order in the affirmative is given, and our hero stands face to face with — his master. Mr. Birch is a great man; the founder of a flourishing academy; where everything accessible to the human intellect is taught, for thirty pounds per annum. Not that the master teaches these things, nor, in truth, anything; he is simply the capitalist. He has married Mistress Birch — tart, tall, middle-aged, — a withering virgin, with £1200 ready money, and has set up a factory for education. To carry on this, he has only to hire the heads of other men, — one classical scholar, one French ditto, one accountant

(capable of reducing the solid globe to figures), and the thing is done ! To each of these the proprietor yields a modest salary — say £20 a year — reserving to himself the residue of the profits, and the entire credit and control of the school. For his pastime, he occasionally hears some urchin of tender years misspell words of two syllables ; or overlooks another manufacturing pothooks and hangers, (which lean in every possible direction,) or writing ‘ *Imetate your copey* ’ in a round hand full of angles. He it is who dispenses the blessings of the ferule, or lifts on high the wailing ‘ cane ’ — potent emblem of authority, and bearing with it a heavier tyranny than hangs at the end of a sceptre. He it is who purchases the food, the bedding, the household articles ; who orders the stationery, hires the servants, determines on half-holydays, or a walk into the fields ; and, in short, is supreme above all, save one person ; for there is *One* ‘ domination ’ greater than his, and that is the mistress of the academy — *his* mistress — Mistress Birch. And, indeed, it is into her august presence (her husband sitting beside her) that our usher is ushered on his first introduction to the school. A few words are sufficient to identify the new-comer, to repeat the terms of the arrangement already agreed upon ; after which he is dismissed to the school-room. The master and mistress remain silent. ‘ Well, my dear ? ’ — (The former is looking interrogatories.) — ‘ Well, Mr. B. ? ’ is the echo. ‘ How do you like him, my love ? ’ inquires the master again. ‘ I don’t like his *looks*, Mr. B.’ replies the meek mate emphatically. ‘ Then

you may depend, my dear, that I'll look sharp after him, and keep him tight to his work.'

Under these auspices, and with no more preface to a life of toil, the usher takes his place.

During the first evening, he has nothing to do, but to sit and be stared out of countenance by sixty or seventy inquisitive eyes. He is introduced, in due course, to Mr. Ledger, who teaches reading, writing, and arithmetic; and to Monsieur Molière, the French master.

The first of these is a hard, precise-looking man, with one pen in his hand and another behind his ear. He is mending and manufacturing for the next day's consumption. The boys near him are humming their several lessons, to be said 'by heart' on the following morning. By his side, or before the fire, a pewter vessel may be seen, containing a pint of Truman and Hanbury's treble stout (XXX), and manifesting Mr. Ledger's capacity for enjoyment. M. Molière is playing a game at draughts, 'French draughts,' with one of the bigger boys. His snuff-box (often resorted to) stands on his desk, at his right hand; his pocket-handkerchief, a dark cotton check, lies spread on his knee. Thus, our hero—except for an occasional civil inquiry from the Frenchman—is left alone. He surveys the long school-room; the ceiling smoked with mischievous candles; the walls spattered with ink; the desks and wainscots carved with a thousand names,—letters, and figures—black Anno Dominis,—carrying back, to its very commencement, the history of the school. When his curiosity is sated, he relapses into melancholy thoughts, or consoles himself

with a little Horace, or any other portable classic his pocket may hold, until the large bell announces that nine o'clock (the scholars' bedtime) has arrived. Afterwards, a scanty supper of bread and cheese closes the day. At ten o'clock he is conducted to his resting-place. He looks around, and perceives that a narrow room, with two broken windows, a hard truckle-bed, and a sulky boy for his bedfellow, are to form part of his portion. He lies awake, dreaming of the past — prophesying of the future — oppressed by dark forebodings. He tries at last to sleep away care, but he cannot close his eyes till it is near to daylight; and at daylight he is ordered to rise, to commence the labors of the day.

'The young gentlemen of Switchington House Academy, Mr. Mayne, always resume their scholastic duties at seven in the morning.' Such are the words of Mr. Birch; and his law is as that of the Medes and Persians. At seven, therefore, the usher is at his desk; and he calls up the first class. This comprehends the eldest boys, who repeat, tolerably correctly, forty lines of Latin, their task. They eye the new usher boldly; wink at each other; smother a laugh or two, and retire. The younger children are less impertinent, but, unfortunately, they are less perfect also; and our hero has to prompt, and repeat, and explain, till he is weary. At last, nine o'clock sounds for breakfast, when some thick bread and butter (the latter saltier than the salt sea), and a basin of weak tea — the ungenerous manufacture of Mrs. Birch — are placed before him. They suffice, however, for his wants, and are despatched speedily. After which, a little conversation ensues

between our usher and M. Molière, which languishes till ten o'clock, when the 'second school' commences. The second school presents the same picture as the first; the same conflict with dulness and insolence, the same weariness as before: and it concludes by the bell tolling for dinner, as it had tolled for breakfast four or five hours before. There is again a 'third school,' which is a repetition of the second; a third meal, of which we need not detail the particulars; and the day, with its tasks, is at an end.

But why need we trouble the reader with any minute details on this point? Our business is not with the school, but with the usher; and we will, therefore, pursue his individual history.

At first, the step and bearing of the usher are timid, awkward, unassured: he forgets the learning that is in him, he forgets his station, and abases himself to the level of the big blockhead whom he teaches, and whose head is as empty as a drum. His eye is unsettled, his speech faltering, his civility exceeds all bounds, and is painful from its excess. But diffidence is a short-lived virtue. It is, perhaps, the only thing that never reaches its maturity. Perhaps it has no maturity, but dies for ever in its youth — a bud that no summer can unfold, a fruit to which cold and heat are alike fatal.

'Time and the hour,' however, enable the usher to cast off this uncomfortable virtue. In a month he moves more steadily — he looks grave at the scholars' jests — he repels their insults — he even threatens them with tasks, with corporal punishments. The eternal *change* which is going on in all things (from the bishop down to the worm), reaches

even him. His firmness begets respect; although respect is still withheld by some. The froward and lazy dunces, whom no kindness can soften and no ray illumine, — they are waxing wroth at his assumption of authority. They can no longer waste the entire day, ‘from morn till dewy eve.’ Something is enforced from them, for their own sakes, for the credit of the school; something besides winning farthings from each other at dumps or marbles; something besides cutting names and notches on the desks, and painting their colleagues’ faces with ink, and consuming gingerbread ‘on trust,’ and gabbling, and lying, and fighting, and putting cinders in the usher’s pocket. The usher is, in sad truth, doomed to become a lesson-compeller; and earns, unexpectedly their sullen hate. So it is! We thread the pathway steadily, strictly; doing injury to no one, and good to all. We do ‘our duty,’ with a kindly spirit, and are rejoicing that we are without an enemy, when suddenly the serpent curls upwards from the grass: we have trod on it unawares, and it stings us till we are in danger of death.

In his turn, our hero himself become less amiable: he is fretted and wearied for ever. Day by day, and all day long, the same dull din goes on — the same endless, hopeless toil; no prospect of good, no respite, no sympathy, no reward, —

‘Pain, pain, ever, for ever!’

Then, he is without a friend. For the usher stands always apart; the master is above him, the scholars beneath. He is alone, — tossed and swung about in the dark and turbid region of his thoughts, — the light

of hope, that once threw a trivial ray upon him, being now diminished to the smallest point. Once, he had a poor refuge in his father's house; he was at least endured there: it was there he passed his brief holy-days. But his father is now dead, and his house is the home of a stranger. During the tedious school-hours he is at the oar; a slave chained to his galley. In the intervals, he cowers over the winter fire; or watches games which he can partake no longer; or he is sent out, at the end of a long file of boys, to keep anxious watch over all, and to check every turn and threat of mischief. His position is such that he is certain to attract dislike, and can never hope to excite affection. Should you enter the school play-ground on some sunny day, you will perhaps see a man with a small book in his hand, pacing up and down, under the southern wall. He is young; but his face is thin and colorless; his cheek hollow, his lips compressed, his eye hard and watchful. He stops occasionally, and casts a fierce inquisitive look around; or he calls out in a harsh voice, or quells a dispute about marbles, or stops the progress of an incipient fight. If you wait, you will perhaps see him followed by a boy on tiptoe, making faces behind his back, or 'squaring' as though he would hit him in the spine. If the urchin be more than usually lively, he chucks, softly, the poor man's back; or puts dust in his pocket; or thrusts a pen under his collar, having a string and tassel annexed, producing a tail indeed of some pretensions, to the irrepressible delight of all beholders. On the walls there is the same man's likeness, scrawled in chalk or charcoal, exaggerated and ridiculous, but still with

sufficient resemblance to enforce your laughter. Do you ask who is at once this tyrant and victim? Alas! it is still — the Usher!

We have said that sometimes the usher falls headlong into love, and sheds 'the boy' in his seventeenth or eighteenth spring. At other times, circumstances delay this great metamorphosis; and he goes, ignorant of evil to come, to his first 'situation.' *Then*, he encounters the sweet danger. He has hitherto seen no one: he has been a boy, in fact, below the simper even of a school-girl. He is now placed, face to face, with his master's daughter. The haughty Priscilla eyes him, sees before her a countenance filled with expression, and resolves to add to her conquests another victim. In the dearth of kindness, the smiles of the provincial beauty are like balmy airs: they fan him, soften him, flutter him, warm and ripen him into love. He takes no heed; but springs headlong into the waves. He is wild enough, perhaps, to hope for a return. A return! Fool! do you not know that she sees in you nothing, save her father's Helot, — his slave, — the wretched prop, hired to support the burden of the school? She chooses that you shall love, in order that she may trample upon you with treble pride; but a return of your love never enters into the humblest of her dreams. What! she to whom the butcher ducks his head, — to whom the the laundress courtesies, and the pot-boy pulls his shock of hair — towards whom the linen-draper is eager and respectful, — and whom even the apothecary shakes graciously by the hand, telling her, with a smile, that she is committing fresh murders every day? She would as soon think of allying herself

to the street beggar as to the hired usher of her father's school. But this is a secret between her soul and her. The unhappy youth knows it not. He sings her name to the listening night, and creates verses in her praise. He is absorbed and blinded by the atmosphere about him. Like the silk-worm, he is weaving his early shroud: for when the truth at last forces itself upon him, and he beholds himself the sport and scorn of her to whom he had given his entire heart, and whom he had worshipped like a deity, he begins to droop, poor wretch! and pines with a sort of shame; gets day by day thinner, paler; has a more sunken cheek, a dim and hopeless eye. Even she who has deluded him vouchsafes some proud pity, now that she sees him thus sadly changed; although once out of sight, she turns to her glass more triumphantly than before, and asks of it, 'Am I indeed so beautiful?'

But there must be an end to all things, even to an usher. And what can be the end of the young, sickly, over-wrought, friendless, despairing youth, but the old conclusion—death? At three-and-twenty years of age, that is his doom. He is gathered to his fathers, buried quickly and at little cost. He has left enough, just enough, for the cheapest funeral; and two servants of the school attend his obsequies. As the little train passes below the window where the graceful Priscilla (just returned from a pleasant visit) is sitting, humming some popular melody, she sees it, and suddenly checks her music; exclaiming, —almost in the words, perhaps even with some of the feeling, of Lear, —'And my poor fool, then, is dead!'—This is the Usher's epitaph.

Oh, gentle poets ! pure philanthropists ! large-minded philosophers ! men who succor the needy, who help the helpless ! — shed some little pity on the poor Usher ! And oh, ye pious people ! who commiserate the wants of the unlettered savage ; who send out missionaries, (armed with Bibles and cash,) to the Indian forests and remote savannas — to the ignorant islands of the Southern seas, to carry with them civilization and happiness ! Gentlemen who manumit the blacks, who shed tears over your coffee whilst the sugar melts, — (sugar earned by the sweat of sable brows,) — cast one glance of kindness at that slave, the Usher ! He *may* have been bred delicately ; his mind has, assuredly, been nourished by luxurious food. He has dwelt with the sages and poets of the ancient time — even with the moderns. He has conversed with Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras ; with Homer, Dante, Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton — will you have more ? He has walked with Demosthenes on the pebbly beach. Perhaps he is even a philosopher or poet himself. Perhaps he has been unjustly worried by some cur of the critical kennel, some small libeller who writes ‘ Anonymous ’ for his name ; whom he has not strength enough to scorn or laugh at. Look at him — ponder well upon his fate ! He has talents without fame, desires without fruition, ambition without hope. Loneliness, contempt, poverty, despair — these are his portion in this benevolent world ; nothing more. Pity him, help him, legislate for him, if possible. When the third bottle of ruddy port begins to circulate, and your hearts are warming into toleration for all mankind ; when even the scullion sits down to her under-

ground meal in quiet, and the harassed foot-boy (hired 'for all work') rests awhile from his labors ; when the fire crackles, and the lights shine, and the merry Bacchus sparkles by your side ; when there is nothing, in short, between you and Heaven but brilliant dreams ; oh, then give way to the divine religion that is within you—that is in *every* heart—and yield something, be it only a little pity, to the most abused and injured of all who are supposed to enjoy the rights of man—the English Usher !

1841.

AN INCIDENT
IN THE LIFE OF MONSIEUR DE BEARN.

(COMEDY.)

SCENE I.

[Two middle-aged men of good mien are seen riding together slowly in the sun, followed by a couple of young peasants, who appear to be lovers. On one side stretches out a fertile, though not very picturesque French landscape, on the other the little village of Creteil. The younger horseman is speaking earnestly to the other, and apparently detailing some case of interest, in which the young couple are implicated. His companion listens to him generally with great attention, but occasionally displays some symptoms of impatience. The elder person calls himself M. de Bearn, and the younger M. de Bethune.]

M. Bearn. Well! — well!

M. Bethune. Well, Sir; the lawyer was — a knave.

M. Bearn. Ah! that is so new. A knave? Morbleu! what else should he be? Thou wouldst make a pigeon of the kite. Go to! thy philosophy is beef-witted, mon ami. Thou must measure these lawyers by a longer rule. But go on, go on! This youth — ?

M. Bethune. This youth (being engaged to the girl, as I have said,) goes on his father's death to this knavish lawyer—

M. Bearn. His name? His name?

M. Bethune. La Brice, an advocate (or petit judge) at Charenton. The youth demands to have the fields assigned to him, for which his father had paid this lawyer the earnings of a long life. My lawyer appears to forget—asks to see the receipt acknowledging the money. It is produced—admitted to be right—M. la Brice is rich in protestation—he swears some thousand oaths—demands to have the receipt—to peruse—to register—or some such thing. The youth departs, oppressed with respect for M. L'Avocat—returns in a week—*Ciel!*—'tis all forgotten. La Brice denies all that has occurred, and defies our young friend to battle. What is to be done?

M. Bearn. Justice, no less, strict justice. But, attend—may not your peasant be the knave? Our lawyers have a bad name, as thou know'st; and there is a proverb——

M. Bethune. No, Sir. It was not on report only that I endeavored to interest you for these people. La Brice had a secretary—a young man newly admitted to the mysteries of law. He heard the advocate confess to his wife the payment of the money. He was moved by the youth's distress—searched for the disputed paper—found it—brought it to me—and—here it is!

M. Bearn. Bah!—'tis a hot sun, this. Shall we not find some melons at this place, think you? [*Takes the paper.*] Ha! this speaks plainly, as thou say'st.

We'll try what can be done. But didst thou not say that this knave cast hot eyes upon the girl? — that he offered to waive all objections, on certain — conditions? hey?

M. Bethune. He did. He saw that she was pretty, and grew enamored of her.

M. Bearn. Demoiselle, come forward! Let us hear the rest from thee. This lawyer — what, he muttered verse unto thee, ha? — took thee by the palm, my child, did he? — plucked those cherries from thy lips? Fish! why dost hang thine head? Look up, as boldly as thou dost eye thy shepherd there, and tell me all.

Madelaine. He was rude, Sir; and — and — very strong —

M. Bearn. Gramercy! we must have a bed of justice. Go on, go on!

Marcel. I came up, Sir, when Madelaine was struggling. I knew her cry, though I was outside o' the house.

M. Bearn. Ha! Didst forget thyself, and meddle with the law?

Marcel. I only hit him, Sir, with the wolf-spear. He dropped down like —

M. Bearn. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Marry, and dost ask for justice after this? Methinks thou hast done thyself right enow, already. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! [*Aside to Bethune.*] I love to hear that, now and then, these hard heads encounter steel. They will not fit their skulls with helmets, not they, nor fight for the king — no, though the devil were with his enemies.

M. Bethune. They are a bad set, truly. Yet, per-

haps, like caterpillars and ants — they do good in the moral, as their brother vermin in the vegetable world.

Marcel. If you know any one at court, Sir — ?

Madelaine. Ah, Sir ; if you had any interest with the king, Sir ? They say he is a good king, in the main, Sir — although — although —

M. Bearn. *Sacre !* — What's here ? Go on : I bid thee. Speak out, demoiselle, and tell me what is this 'although.' 'He's a good king — although.' Marry, thou must come to Court, and see how well he loves justice. I have some interest with a great lord there, and will use it for thee. Come ! wilt go ?

Marcel. No, Sir, no Court ; no Court, if you please. The king's a good king, and a brave king. I love him, and would fight for him ; ay, would give him anything — anything i' the world — save one.

M. Bearn. Ha ! — and that ? — and that ? What is that *one*, mon ami ?

Marcel. 'Tis — my wife, Sir.

M. Bethune. Ha, ha, ha, ha !

M. Bearn. How ! what dost laugh at ?

M. Bethune. Ha, ha, ha, ha !

M. Bearn. Ha, ha, ha, ha ! — By Mars, he's not a fool, this fellow. Come hither, knave. Dost know that thou insult'st the king by this suspicion ? But he loves brave men ; and I shall marvel if he doth not tie a sword round thy loins, and bid thee fight for him as thou hast fought for our demoiselle, here.

M. Bethune. Where can Vitry and the rest be loitering ?

M. Bearn. Ride towards Grosbois, and try if thou canst meet with him. Meantime I will on with our

two friends, and try the civility of this place. What village is this?

Marcel. Creteuil, Sir.

M. Bearn. Bid them come hither to me, at the inn. I shall see what partridges be there. Perhaps we may find some melons, too; ha!—Thou lovest the cool flavor of that rough-looking fruit, I know. 'Tis like thyself—the outside harsh—

M. Bethune. Spare me. You said that I should go?

M. Bearn. Go then, and return quickly—do you hear? quickly. [*Bethune exit.*] Now, my friends, you shall show me the way to the inn. Walk nearer to me, my child: I must hear more of thy story, as we go along. Nay, thou need'st not take her by the arm, young man. My horse and I understand what city breeding is. Dost thou not, mon cher general?—
[*Patting his horse.*]

Marcel. Has he been in battle, Sir?

M. Bearn. 'Battle,' sirrah? He has drank blood, and lived upon smoke ever since his fourth birth-day. But, we are at Creteuil. Now, which way must we turn?

Marcel. This way, Sir, this way. Follow me.

M. Bearn. [*Sings.*] Je ne sais par où commencer
A louer votre grand beauté, &c.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The interior of an Inn at Creteil.

LIA BRICE and three other **LAWYERS** seated at a Table in the Distance: nearer are the **HOSTESS** and her **DAUGHTER**.

1st Lawyer. How much longer are we to wait, dame? Methinks thy dinner lags like a rainy day. 'Twas 'coming,' as thou saidst, an hour ago.

Host. Ah! Monsieur — a few minutes more; a few minutes, and you shall taste — Dieu! Where is the sauce, Marie? the parsley? the spice? Make haste, — Where is the wine? the *best* wine, for Monsieur La Brice?

M. BEARN entering.

M. Bearn. Within there! Ho! Now mother, I am hungry: — Ha! this is excellent. Quick, let me have two of thy birds, and a bottle of thy best wine. Quick, dame! I have plenty of hunger, and little patience.

Host. No patience? Ah! take care, Marie — that's well. No patience, Monsieur? 'Tis a virtue you must borrow, an you have it not. Dost see those gentlemen at the table — there?

M. Bearn. Ay, four — ill-looking rogues enough.

Host. Hush! — they are lawyers. They will pull justice on you, if you affront them. Observe, Monsieur; they are as hungry as yourself, and as little patient. You cannot taste of these birds unless they consent.

M. Bearn. Um! — If it must be so, give my compliments to the gentlemen, and say —

1st Lawyer. Now, dame, is our dinner ready?

Host. Ah! Monsieur — one minute more. You shall taste such a dish, shall make you amends for waiting.

1st and 2d Lawyer. Make haste! Make haste!

La Brice. Make haste, beldame, with your infernal stews. Dost think we are to be fed with promises. Make haste, and serve thy best dish up to the ministers of justice.

Daughter. There are some poor people still waiting in the yard, Messieurs. Will you hear another cause while —

La Brice. No more; no more causes. Let them come again to-morrow.

Daughter. This is the third day, they say, that they have been —

La Brice. How! Dost mean to arraign the officers of the king? You, dame, dost hear what is addressed to us?

Host. Peace, minx! Cannot you see that their workshops are tired with their heavy duties. She is but a child, Monsieur, and does not understand these things. How dare you reply to Monsieur La Brice?

M. Bearn. [*Aside.*] La Brice! So, that is he.

Marie. [*Whispering.*] They have done nothing. They came so late that many of the people were gone.

M. Bearn. [*Aside.*] Is this the way that justice is administered in the reign of Henry of Navarre?

La Brice. What fellow is that lurking by the side of the fire?

Host. 'Tis only a traveller, Monsieur.

M. Bearn. 'Tis but a traveller, M. La Brice, who is desirous to make one at dinner with you. Will you permit it? He will drink his wine fairly and pay honestly for what he has. Will you admit me, gentlemen?

La Brice. No, fellow.

1st Lawyer. No, — no.

2d Lawyer. No, scoundrel.

3d Lawyer. No, fellow.

4th Lawyer. No, dog.

M. Bearn. *Ventre Saint Gris!* What a clamor of base tongues. A little whipping will be well bestowed here. [*Aside.*] Gentlemen I speak to ye courteously and I offer fairly. I am a hungry traveller. I pray ye consider my condition, and admit me to your fare.

La Brice. Admit *thee*, villain? May we be flogged beneath the gallows if we admit thee. Be gone, and thank our clemency that we do not commit thee into the hands of justice.

M. Bearn. Justice!

1st Lawyer. Ay, fellow, justice. Admit *thee*! If we do may we be flogged; so begone!

M. Bearn. [*Aside.*] By heaven, ye *shall* — all — every one, if I have interest enough with the hangman. By holy Saint Denis, I'll have every calf-skin amongst you scored with crimson. I'll teach ye courtesy.

La Brice. What is the scoundrel muttering?

M. Bearn. I only repeat my request. I pray —

La Brice. Sirrah! — You have offended twice. If you do as much again, you will sleep in prison to-night, and dine to-morrow on bread and water.

M. Bearn. Gramercy ! that would be odd enough, and a little unpleasant. [*Aside.*] Well, Sirs ; if you will not behave like courteous gentlemen, I demand that you hear, in your office of judges, a complaint which a friend of mine has to prefer,

La Brice. No more complaints to-day. You may come to-morrow.

M. Bearn. To-morrow will not suit us : we must be heard to-day. Come in, there. Ho ! Marcel ! Madelaine ! Come hither, children. These gentlemen will hear your cause.

MARCEL and MADELAINE enter.

1st Lawyer. We'll hear no more.

M. Bearn. Approach. I say they *will* hear you ; and justice will be done ; so, fear not. Come hither to me, and I will tell your story. Now, look before ye. Those three gentlemen in black are your judges : and there — look boldly — there is your foe.

Madel. Ah ! save me.

Mascel. Don't tremble, Madelaine. I've got the wolf-spear here.

La Brice. What impudent mummery is this ? Where are our men ? Claude ! Pierot ! Jacques ! Laf —

M. Bearn. Silence, Sir : you stand here as defendant in this case, and not as judge. I will tell you, however that your men are gone. The chief of them was a comrade of mine once ; but, being wounded, has fallen it seems into humbler service.

La Brice. How ! How, Sirrah ? A —

3d Lawyer. [*Aside.*] Hush ! — I think I have seen this man's face at Paris, — somewhere at Court.

M. Bearn. Ay, Sirs; I have said it: and which amongst you will gainsay it? Let that man step forward and face me, who shall dare to say that *his* service is as honorable as that of Henry of Navarre?

Host. [*Aside to Bearn.*] Mon ami! Let me advise you. You will have a stone pillow to sleep on, if you go on this way much longer.

M. Bearn. Peace, woman!—Now, Sirs, awake your wits, and listen to our story. La Brice, look well upon this girl: and you, Sirs, observe your fellow. This youth, beside me here, (his name is Marcel,) is the son of an honest peasant at Charenton. The old man, his father, is dead; but before his death he bargained with your honest friend there, the Sieur La Brice, for certain meadows and an orchard. He paid him in hard money 2000 livres: La Brice gave him, in return his signature, and this he now disowns.

La Brice. 'Tis false; I did not. I will not deny—*my signature.* Where is my signature? Produce it.

M. Bearn. Stay, Sir. Justice must not be hurried. Did you not receive this money?—(I ask you on your soul)—and did you not also deny it? Speak, Sir Lawyer.

La Brice. I deny nothing: I admit nothing. Produce your receipt; the receipt.

M. Bearn. O justice! thy forms are stumbling-blocks over which they who have not spurs of gold are sure to fall. Will you not admit the receipt, M. La Brice? It will do honor to—

La Brice. Peace, villain! Brothers, he is an imposter,—some moral quack, who wishes to fill his pockets by preaching money out of ours. La Grosse!

Beaufais ! Lafitte ! Draw your swords and seize him ! [*They draw their swords.*]

M. Bearn. *Sacre* — what is to be done now ? Out, friend. [*Drawing his sword.*] We will slit an ear or two, and all will be well. Now Messieurs —

Marcel. Come on ! Come on !

1st and 2d Lawyer. Down with him ! Down with him !

La Brice. Come on, villain ! Stand by me, Beaufais. Strike him ! Stab him !

Lawyers. Ay, down with them both. Down with them.
[*They fight.*]

The door is suddenly burst open, and M. DE BETHUNE, VITRY, and others rush in.

M. Bethune. Now, what is this ? — Diable ! Fall back !

Lawyers. Down with them ! Down —

M. Bethune. SAVE THE KING !

La Brice and Lawyers. Ha ! — [*They fall back.*]

Vitry. Strike down the villains !

Henry IV. Stay ! — Hold your hands, gentlemen. Had I come hither as Henry of Navarre, these men would have earned the penalties of treason : but as it is, a somewhat milder penance will suffice. You, Sir, La Brice ! Stand forth !

La Brice. Sire ! — [*Kneels.*]

Henry. You have done injustice on the poor. You, who ought as a judge to have protected the helpless, have deceived and oppressed them. You are a judge no longer. Where is your paper, Baron de Rosny ? (for you must consent to leave M. de Bethune when give up M. de Bearn.)

Rosny. It is here, Sire.

Henry. Now, Sirrah, do you know this paper? this *signature* which you would have, so lately?

La Brice. Sire, I confess all. Spare me.

Henry. Messieurs, you have not yet asked me to partake of your partridges —?

Lawyers. Oh! Sire — most welcome — our joy — our delight —

Henry. Bah! — You have forgot, Messieurs, a speech which I must recall. ‘May we be flogged, if ——’ it shall be done.

1st Lawyer. Ah! Sirè, that is not just.

Henry. Sirrah, it is true that there is no punishment for inhospitality in France. The makers of our laws, perhaps, did not contemplate that crime. But you have delayed the course of justice, and drawn your swords on unoffending men. For these crimes you are to be flogged (observe, Vitry, that it be *well* done) round the walls of Charenton.

Lawyers. Sire, we are ministers of justice —

Henry. Justice! — Ye are the dogs who bark about the halls of justice, and bite the suitors as they enter. Ye hide your threadbare wits in black apparel, and look more solemn than wisdom. Ye are knaves, Messieurs, and must give up your office, your titles, your pensions, your characters. Ye shall be stript bare, and left naked for the contempt of all men. Justice, quotha — and you, Sirrah — La Brice, you would ruin this demoiselle here, to gratify —

Rosny. [*Whispering him.*] Spare this point, Sire, I entreat.

Henry. Silence, Rosny. You would ruin this youth,

I say, and strip him of his all — for what? Gracery, because you may have for dinner another partridge which you will not share with a hungry man. You are worse than the base cur in the fable.

Lawyer. Ah! M. Rosny — intercede for us, Sire! —

Rosny. Take them away, M. Vitry; they begin to be troublesome.

Henry. One moment, stay. Vitry, you will keep this man, the Sieur La Brice, in custody after his amusement at Charenton: the rest may be *then* dismissed. We shall see how he acts towards our young friends here, before we decide on the remainder of his punishment.

La Brice. Sire, I am willing to do anything — to do —

Henry. Justice is all that we require from a knave, Sirrah, and more than we generally expect. Justice, however, we *shall* require, before you visit your chateau at Charenton again. Lead them away.

[*Exeunt Vitry, &c., with Lawyers.*]

Rosny. Now Marcel, and Madelaine, you may retire. Is it not so, Sire? You may leave your cause in my hands, for the king watches over your interests.

Madel. Sire, we are so thankful — so —

Henry. Peace, demoiselle: I must stop your speech — [*kisses her*] — for it may else be long, and our dinner is ready, as you see. You must not be jealous of the king, Marcel: he will leave you and your demoiselle to quiet. [*To Rosny.*] When shall we be at Charenton again?

Rosny. Next month, — the 6th and 7th.

Henry. The 7th then be it. Observe, my children, you will meet me *here* on the 7th of next month : and on that morning I shall expect to hear that Madelaine has become a bride. Take care that it be so ; for I shall bring her dowry with me. In the mean time, Rosny, we trust them to your care. Adieu, mes enfans !

Marcel. Farewell, Sir, [*Madelaine courtesies.*] —
Monsieur, farewell. [Exit.]

Henry. Adieu, adieu ! Rosny shall bring a sword for thee when we come. So, all is done, at last ; the innocent are saved and the guilty punished.

Rosny. It is like the poetical justice one sees in a play.

Henry. 'Tis so ; and now — for this breathing has increased my appetite — we'll lay aside our serious looks, and eat our partridges without more ceremony.

THE HAPPY DAY.

(FARCE.)

It was about two o'clock on a fine blazing morning in July 182—, that a plain-looking man might have been seen reclining against the blue sofa pillows which ornamented his lodging in Dover-street. This person was the lion of a season. He had written sixteen pages of satire, and might be considered as immortal until Christmas. If the reader desire to know his name, it was—Lambert. Lambert was in prodigious request. He had lived sixteen summers in London, and had passed off as a sensible man. But *now* he had written rhymes (!) and was to be distinguished. Accordingly, every body assaulted him with kindness. He was overwhelmed with invitations, just as they pelt people with sugar-plums at a carnival. Commoners looked up to him; lords smiled upon him; and ladies — ! But they went beyond all. Nine-and-twenty maids and matrons formed themselves into a society, and called themselves 'The Lambert Club.' Three young spinsters who had written anonymously, announced their passion and despair in sonnets. In a word, the world of fashion was very nearly forgetting itself; and the world of azure blushed purple with delight.

But we are introducing the reader to Mr. Lambert. He was, as we have said, an author of sixteen pages, and was seated on his sofa in Dover-street. A cup of cold coffee stood by him ; the urn had ceased to sing ; the thin slices of dry toast remained undisturbed in the rack, while the ' lion' read, with a languid and somewhat dissatisfied aspect, a newspaper of the day. Like Seged, ' Lord of Ethiopia,' he had said scarcely five minutes before, that he *would* at last have *one* quiet evening. ' I am resolved,' said he, ' to see no one on — *Friday*.' That was the evening that he fixed upon for tranquillity. The words were scarcely uttered, when — lo ! in the newspaper which he held, he saw a masqued ball proclaimed, in which he was implicated, but which he had forgotten. This jarred upon his patience. But *n'importe*, there was but *one* obstacle ; and that one he determined to surmount. He would not go. ' What is man ?' &c. said he, and was about to proceed in a moral strain, when his servant entered with a letter.

Lambert. Now, Tyson, what bad news have you brought, that you look so cloudy ? [*Reads.*] Um — um — um — on Friday ! Friday ? Pshaw ! Impossible. Bring me my desk. I must accomplish a billet, I see, and refuse that odious Alderman's invitation for the three hundred and fortieth time. [*Writes.*] Why cannot these city cannibals tear their beef and pudding to pieces without my being present at the ceremony ? There — it is done ; and I am once more free to enjoy my own exquisite society on Friday.

[*Servant exit with letter.*]

Lamb. [*takes up the newspaper.*] Now let me forget

myself awhile. But in what? — in poetry? yes, it shall be in poetry. What have we here? an acrostic — Umph! L — A — M — B — E — R — T. Pshaw! 'tis that old fool, Mrs. Bluebell. I always know her by her bad grammar. I'll try a paragraph. *We hear — um — um — um — that it is expected that the Countess of Slabberwit's masque on Friday will be — um — um — preëminent for elegance — characters — grace — beauty — wit — um — um — and above all, that diamond of fashion — the celebrated — accomplished — witty — Charles Lambert.* Pah! — I meet my own figure at every turn, like the man in the haunted house. And then this scribbler — this varlet! His praise is fit for the meridian of Ispahan. I *have* my patience; and might endure a little. But, by Phœbus, I cannot digest this fellow's fare. 'Tis *all* honey, i' faith; and of very indifferent quality. But I'll fly from it all. A walk into the green fields — [*rings*] — or the green park will set all right for to-day, and on Friday —

[*Servant enters.*]

Serv. Captain Cucumber's compliments, Sir, and begs that you won't forget Friday.

Lamb. How! what? won't? Why I *have* forgot it. What shall I do? Umph! — a — Tyson — My compliments to the Captain, and my aunt Chamomile is now so *seriously* indisposed, that I am *obliged* to deny myself the pleasure of visiting my friends; and — a — a — that will do.

Serv. Yes, Sir.

[*Exit.*]

Lamb. Soh! there's another impediment overcome,

and at last I am safe. Now then I can read the paper with ease. Now I can *enjoy* the paper. Let me see. Oh ! here is a full, true, and particular account of the Duchess of Ducat's party. She always has her good deeds recorded at length, I know, and pays the printer by the yard. [*Reads.*] Um — um — *her grace — noble hostess — profusion of diamonds — ostrich* — ha, ha, ha ! she wears her feathers like a Cherokee, and carries double the quantity of paint. Um — um — *the Marchioness of — the Countess — Lady — Lady Tip-pet* — Bah ! That old woman carries Christmas about her all the year long, and has left directions in her will to be buried in a blanket. What doth *she* out of sables ? Oh ! *elegant furs*. I thought so — um — *black velvet* — ha, ha, ha ! a Kamskatchan ! But, allons ! *Sirs — Sir William Witless — Hairbrain — Bulfinch — Gargle* — um — um. *Messrs.* — a brave list of these, however — *Dashet — Dicer — Effet — Foles* — (his family abolished the second o) — *Gouthead — Gracious* — ay, that's the solemn commoner, who tells us over his tough mutton and potatoes, that he *might* have been a peer, but that the family name, &c. — *Gubbins* — who the devil is Gubbins ? He is novel — *Holmes — Horseman* — why he wrote me from Newmarket that he was confined by the spavin : how *he* distinguisheth himself on two legs is beyond my power of prophecy — *Hilldown — Highbred — Halfbred — Ireton* — a very gentlemanlike fellow, Ireton — *Impost* — Ah ! the citizen who always looks like a bill of lading. He has'nt more than half a dozen words in his mouth, but a thundering sum-total in his pocket — *Kornish — Kornish* ? — Oh ! the country gentleman whose fat wife ran

away from him and her three-and-twenty children, with Dick Minifie of the 20th. — *Klapperhausen* — *Martlet* — *Monson* — Monson's dinners are more select than any man's in town — *Mawkish* — *Minifie* — Diavolo ! what, is the Cornet here to ? By Vulcan, he is a bold man to approach so near the Esquire Kornish. I wonder the man doesn't toss him on his horns. Um—um — but enough, and more than enough. Stay ! what is that — *We hear that her Grace will again on Friday* — Tush ! what have I to do on Friday, but muse in meadows or by silver springs ? Let me see — how do the lines run —

‘ Let me wander all unseen
By hedge-row elms and hillocks green.’

Serv. [*enters.*] Sir, here is Lord New —

Lord Newgate [*entering.*] Ha ! my dear Lambert — how are you ? how are you ? I've just dropped in to mark you — to fix you — my mother's kick-up, you know.

Lamb. I really do *not* know.

Lord N. Oh ! yes, you do — on Friday — you know.

Lamb. On Friday ? —

[But here we must take upon ourselves the quality of historians. We are fearful lest the valiant patrician whom we have introduced may be unintelligible, and seem to belie his nobility. A word or two will explain this. John, Lord Newgate, eldest son and heir of the Earl of Kettleton, by Dame Martha his wife, (who was sole heiress of Jonathan, Lord Carbon and Viscount Newgate — formerly Jonathan Colepitts, Esq., an eminent miner and member of Parliament) was at

this time about thirty-one years of age. He was a person of various accomplishments. He was a pugilist, a jockey, a dog-fighter, a cock-feeder, a bully, and a gambler; and, in short, distinguished himself in every possible fashion in which a dunce may become eminent. He was a knave by nature, and a senator by descent; dirty, coarse, cunning, and illiterate. He wore his own straight, matted black hair; had the low look of a sot; dressed in short breeches and boots; talked slang, and whistled in company; swore at the maids; spat in the candle; blundered in grammar; despised women; hated books; and stood up five feet eight inches complete, a specimen of what a peer of the realm may arrive at, when nature is pleased to laugh at the fantastic tricks of fortune.]

Lambert was naturally appalled at this apparition, and echoed his last words once more. 'On Friday?' repeated he, rather disconcerted.

Lord N. Why, to be *sure*; an't I to carry you off to the Grange, as—as—Pooh! as the fellow in the fable did Proserpine.

Lamb. 'Your Lordship means to liken yourself to the devil,' replied Lambert. 'Lady Charlotte, who plays the airs of *Il Ratto* so divinely, would have told your lordship that the "fellow" was Pluto.'

Lord N. True, true, I remember now, it *was* Plato. He was own brother to Socrates, the man who drank poison in the 'dock.' By the way, do you know old Glauber actually prescribes hemlock for my father. By gad, Sir, I shouldn't wonder if the old Earl was to topple off one of these odd mornings, and then we shall have *him* in history, I suppose, as well as Socrates.

Lamb. There may be some mistake —

Lord N. Oh! no — no: true as a die. Hyacinth — you know Hyacinth — a d — d deep scholar, I'm told, — well, Sir, *he* did it into English. Poor old Ruddle (our chaplain) couldn't manage the Doctor's Latin — so my sister Jessy wrote up post to the young Reverend, and the thing was untied in twinkles. But stay, I've got a square of pasteboard for you — wouldn't let the servant bring it — Ha! why where is it? I *had* it. Where can it be? I must have left it in the stable. Let — me — see. Here's the receipt for the spavin — and the case-bottle of brandy — and the half-crown for Sir Thomas Saddleback's man Jem — and the two dog-whips — and the whistle — and the new sneezer — and the Wit's Companion — and — ha! here it is at last.

Lamb. [*reads.*] Um — um.

Lord N. Why, what ha' you got here? [*goes to the bookcase.*] Oh! — books. Um — Ha! — Old Mortality? — Oh! Sam Swiftwell's horse, that run for the Sillinger. No, it an't, [*reads.*] Um — Claverhouse — Balfour — um — um — Humph! deuced clever, I dare say. What's next? The dog — of Venice? Well, I never heard o' that breed, however. Live and larn, as they say. Ah, ha! — what ha' you got here. So, ho! one of the little Marlboroughs, I see — Come here — Pompey! Pompey! [*Pompey bites him.*] Ah! — you little devil —

Lamb. [*stifling a laugh.*] I hope your Lordship is not hurt. I'm really sorry that any friend of mine should so far forget your Lordship's station as to —

Lord N. Oh! never mind. I'm used to these things — There — that's my way. I put my finger in my

mouth — tie my pocket handkerchief round the part, and all's well again before you can say 'Jack Robinson.' But, come, you've read the square, and must go with me into the country.

Lamb. Must? — My Lord, I am not a faun.

Lord N. A fawn? No, I know that; nor a stag neither. But we'll teach you to run like one before we've done with you.

Lamb. Your Lordship is good enough to make a mistake. I was mythological.

Lord N. I don't care what you was — but go with me you must and shall. My sister Charlotte swears it; and so — the thing is settled.

Lamb. What — what can I do to slay time? I cannot dig —

Lord N. Do? Why, you shall flog the water a little with a mayfly — or trowl for pike — or pull a pair of sculls — or take my two tits out in the break — or we'll have a steeple-hunt — or a cock-fight — or set the terriers together for a bit o' sport — in short, there are plenty of ways of amusing you.

Lamb. My Lord, your Lordship is a senator, and, as a consequence, a wise man. I should be happy to join you in some original project — some legislative enactment — but to turn waterman or dog-fighter! My Lord, I cannot humble my opinions.

Lord N. Why then you shall eat and drink five times o' day, and sleep between your meals. I always let my pointers do so, when the season's over.

Lamb [*smiling*.] Ay, — now, indeed, I begin to recognise your Lordship's fine sense and liberal feelings. Eating — (though laborious) — is not to be despised;

and sleeping — is Epicurean! I begin to think that I may be tempted to forsake the town, and transgress a little with the Sylvans. Will your Lordship insure me against any metamorphosis?

[*Servant enters*]

Servant. Mr. Foolscap, Sir.

Lamb. Show him up.

Lord N. Insure you? D — mme, I'll insure you for ten thousand in the Atlas: that's where the Earl insures.

Lamb. Does your Lordship mean the — the Mauritanian? [*Foolscap enters.*] Good morning, Mr. Foolscap.

Lord N. Dash me, if I know. I mean the place where the little yellow figure stands over the door, — a little stout rascal made all of brass, and carrying a ball on his back.

Lamb. Ay, 'tis emblematic.

Lord N. No, no; 'tis *brass*, I tell you — all over from the top to the toe.

Lamb. Ha, ha, ha! I cannot resist so many inducements. Your Lordship shall hear from me on Friday.

Lord N. Why, then, *bon soir*, as the women say.

[*Exit.*]

Lamb. A good morning to your Lordship. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! —

Foolscap. What are you laughing at? I wonder you can laugh at ignorance. I never laugh at ignorance. It moves my pity — my contempt.

Lamb. It moves *mine* — but it moves my muscles also.

Foolscap. The philosopher says that laughter ——

Lamb. Is good for the spleen. So I always laugh when I am able.

[*Servant enters.*]

Servant. Sir Thomas Turnpenny, Sir. [Exit.

Sir Thomas. Ha ! Lambert, my boy — such a set — I've come here at full gallop — on Friday.

Foolscap. Why Friday is the day that ——

Lamb. Gentlemen, on Friday I am — inaccessible — engaged — invisible — what you will.

Sir Thomas. Are you mad ? I tell you there is a match — a match ! Five thousand's the sum — you and I against ——

Lamb. I am really very sorry, but ——

Sir Thomas. Lambert, you must ——

Foolscap. Mr. Lambert ; I am deputed by the Society for Promoting Grammatical Knowledge, to invite you to become a member — a member, Sir, of that learned body, and to appear and be admitted at their dinner on Friday, Sir.

Lamb. I am much flattered by the compliment, my dear Mr. Foolscap ; but on Friday, I really cannot.

Foolscap. I have done, Sir. I have delivered the message of the Society, Sir.

Lamb. But, hear me. I really am unable, because ——

Foolscap. Good morning, Sir. I will not distress you, Sir, for reasons. Good morning, Sir. [Exit.

Lamb. I —— an old fool !

Sir Thomas. Fool ? — he's an ass. Grammatical knowledge, quotha ! What's the use of grammatical

knowledge? Had *I* ever any grammatical knowledge? Had my father, or my grandfather, or any of their fathers any grammatical knowledge, I should like to know. Never. And yet we've always been returned for the County without opposition, and one of us spoke twice in 'the House!'

Lamb. Amazing!

Sir Thomas. It's true, by jingo. And now doesn't all this prove that —

[*Servant enters.*]

Servant. Miss Lilac will be here directly, Sir.

Sir Thomas. Then I'll be off.

Lamb. Stay a moment, I dare say there's nobody with her.

Servant. Only Miss Bobbin, Sir.

[*Sir Thomas runs out.*]

Lamb. Ha, ha, ha! well. 'Tis a bad wind,' &c. The old proverb reconciles us philosophers sometimes into a toleration of existing evils, and here comes one. What a pretty little knock for an authoress. Now here is a damsel who dips her fingers in ink till she dreams that she is immortal. She comes to visit us bachelors, too, in order to show her contempt of the graces. What can she want? I never saw her but twice in my life, and the last time was fatal to my night's rest. She gabbled so incessantly about the 'march of intellect,' and the equality of genius in the sexes, that she fretted me into a fever, — *me*, who am a stoic by profession! I must not suffer again; — so, allons!

Serv. [entering.] Miss Lilac and Miss Bobbin, Sir.

[Enter Miss Lilac and Miss Bobbin.]

Lamb. Ladies, your most obedient servant.

[They courtesy profoundly.]

Miss L. I am come, my dear Mr. Lambert —

Lamb. Will you not take chairs? [offers them : they sit.] And now ladies, may I beg to know how I can serve you. Miss Highluck, I think? [addressing Miss L.]

Miss L. [offended.] Lilac, Sir!

Miss B. This is Miss Lilac, Sir! a name well known to the present age, as it will be to future generations.

Lamb. [aside.] This is the trumpeter, I suppose. — Miss Lilac, I beg your pardon. My servant mentioned your name but indistinctly.

Miss L. I should have thought, Sir, that I could not have been mistaken.

Lamb. When you were once known? undoubtedly not, Madam, undoubtedly not. But I am an unfortunate bachelor, Madam, dwelling in Bœotia. Your merit, Miss — [to Miss B.] — Lieluck, I think you said, was the name — your merit, Miss Lieluck, is, I am certain, prodigious; but there are some quarters of the world where civilization has never reached — some where the sun itself has no influence. Why should I be ashamed to confess, Madam, that I have yet to learn and admire both your reputation and your genius?

Miss L. [rising.] Really, Sir, this is —

Lamb. Pardon me, Madam, it is a sincere tribute to your genius — unknown.

Miss B. I thought, Sir, that you lived in high society.

Lamb. It is true, Madam, that I am banished — to the land of nobles and senators, of field officers and admirals, of foreign ambassadors and the blood royal.

Miss L. The march of intellect takes another course.

Lamb. Yes, Madam ; it enlists amongst its supporters now the humble, the youthful, the virtuous. Poets now are matured at the boarding-school and philosophers at the plough. The youth of genius from school — the tailor (some Abrahamides) from his board — the young lady from the sampler — the — Why cannot I live amongst authors ?

Miss B. Shouldn't you like it, Sir ?

Lamb. Inevitably, Madam ; they are so sincere, so free from vanity.

Miss L. That is a philosophic observation. Even *I myself*, who am allowed to be the first——

Lamb. Ah, Madam, how glad am I to find that you confirm my crude opinions ! But, let me know how I can be of service to either of you, ladies.

Miss L. Service, Sir ? I really require no ——

Miss B. To be candid, Mr. Lambert, we called merely to see you. We are above the common everyday ideas of decorum. The march of intellect ——

Miss L. Hold your tongue, Araminta. To be brief, I expect a few friends, Mr. Lambert, to come and take tea at my lodgings, and communicate their ideas.

Miss B. Our conversazione is on Friday, Sir, and we shall be proud ——

Lamb. Ah, unlucky, that I am ! On Friday is it ?

Then I fear it is impossible. If, however, it be within the compass of my —

Serv. [*entering.*] The Reverend Mr. Stanley, Sir.

Lamb. [*aside.*] Thank God! — only a country clergyman, ladies; a grave, pious, humble man, I assure you. He has probably a sermon or two in his pocket, which I perhaps may persuade him to —

Miss L. I'm sorry, Sir, but I'm obliged to go.

Miss B. We really must go, Sir. The sermon —

Miss L. Come along, Araminta. [*Turns round at the door, like Belvidera.*] Remember, — Friday!

[*Miss L. and Miss B. exeunt.*]

Lamb. I shall never forget it, Madam, — never. Adieu! Tyson, open the door.

[*Mr. Stanley enters.*]

My dear Stanley, I rejoice to see you. You come like the man of charity to the hungry beggar — the physician to the despairing patient.

Stan. Why what's the matter? I saw nothing but a couple of girls going down stairs. They seemed respectable.

Lamb. Oh yes, dreadful respectable. They are authoresses!

Stan. What, those little things?

Lamb. Yes, those little *things*, as you call them; they are philosophers.

Stan. Ha, ha, ha, philosophers, too! What science do they profess?

Lamb. Oh! they profess no *particular* science.

Stan. What art, then, do they understand?

Lamb. No *art*, that I know of; but — but —

Stan. But what? Can they make a pudding?

Lamb. No; I suppose not.

Stan. Can they make their own gowns, or bonnets? Can they embroider? or make petticoats for the poor? or ——

Lamb. I don't know that they can.

Stan. In what way, then, are they useful?

Lamb. Useful! You have such strange phrases. I did not say that they were useful: they are women of *genius*. That does not not imply a necessity for being useful, I suppose.

Stan. Not in the least, my dear Lambert. I now understand their merits perfectly. I have written a sermon, touching these — these ——

Lamb. You want a word, I see: these 'stars' — these 'meteors.'

Stan. These little hectic disorders, which flush the aspect of the age, and grow pale while we are looking at them. Come, you shall hear me deliver it in my own parish church on Friday.

Lamb. Friday! Friday again!

Serv. [*entering.*] Thirteen cards, Sir; from Lord Lapland, Sir Simon Scatterbrains, Lady Dawdle, the Countess of Crowquill, the ——

Lamb. Stop, stop, thou villain — begone! [*Servant exit.*] For what? for when? [*Reads.*] Ha! fatal, fatal Friday — all for Friday! My dear Stanley, I see that it is in vain to contend against Fate. Some way or other I must become a martyr; and so, as yours is really, after all, the pleasantest invitation I have met with, I will e'en go down to you on Friday, and listen to your country sermon.

[*Exeunt Stanley laughing.*]

ON ENGLISH TRAGEDY.

IN the history of a nation, the progress and vicissitudes of its literature are but too frequently disregarded. The crowning of kings, and the winning of battles, are recorded with chronological accuracy, and the resources of the country are laid open. The eye of the reader is dazzled with the splendor of courts, and the array of armies. The rise and fall of parties — the trial and condemnation of state criminals — the alternations of power and disgrace — are explained to very weariness. But of the quiet conquests of learning there is small account. The philosopher must live in his own page, the poet in his verse; for the national chronicles are almost mute regarding them. The historian's bloody catalogue is not made up of units; but deals only with great assemblages of men — armies, fleets, and senates. The king is the only 'One' included in the story; but of him, be he a cipher or a tyrant, we are told in a way to satisfy the most extravagant desires of loyalty.

There is in this, we think, an undue preponderance — a preference of show to substance — of might to right. There is at least as much importance to be

attached to the acquisition of 'Paradise Lost,' or 'Lear,' as to the gaining of an ordinary victory. Accordingly, we, profiting by the historian's lapse, and in order to do those ingenious persons (the poets and philosophers) justice, assume the right of tracing, from time to time, *their* histories upon our pages, and of discussing, with something of historic candor, their good qualities and defects.

In contemplating the great scene of Literature, the Muses are, beyond doubt, one of the brightest groups; and, among them, those of the *Drama* stand out pre-eminent. To quit allegory—it comes more quickly home to the bosoms of men; it is linked more closely to their interests and desires, detailing matters of daily life, and treating, in almost colloquial phrase, of ordinary passions. It is as a double-sided mirror, wherein men see themselves reflected, with all their agreeable pomp and circumstance, but freed of that rough husk of vulgarity which might tempt them to quarrel with their likeness: while the sins of their fellows are stripped and made plain, and they themselves portrayed with unerring and tremendous fidelity.

Certainly dramatic poetry is more quick and decisive in its effects than poetry of any other kind; and this arises partly from its nature, and partly from the circumstances under which it is made public. In the imagination of a person visiting the theatre, there is a predisposition to receive strong impressions. The toil of the day is over, the spirits are exhilarated, and the nerves rendered susceptible by a consciousness of coming enjoyment. All the fences and guards that a man assumes in matters of business or controversy, are

laid aside. Even the little caution with which he takes up a book (for we have now got a lurking notion that authors are not infallible) is forgotten : he casts off his care and his prudence, and sets both the past and future at defiance when he enters the limits of a theatre. It is impossible for a person unacquainted with dramatic representation, to understand the effect produced on a mixed mass of the people, when a striking sentiment is uttered by a popular actor. The conviction is instantaneous. Hundreds of stormy voices are awakened, the spirit of every individual is in arms, and a thousand faces are lighted up which a moment before seemed calm and powerless ; and this impression is not so transient as may be thought. It is carried home, and nursed till it ripens. It is a germ which blossoms out into patriotism, or runs up rank into prejudice or passion. It is intellectual property, honestly acquired ; and yet debateable ground, on which disputes may arise, and battles are to be fought hereafter.

Men are often amused, and sometimes instructed, by books. But a tragedy is a great moral lesson, read to two senses at once ; and the eye and the ear are both held in alliance to retain the impression which the actor has produced. A narrative poem is perhaps more tempting in its shape than a play, and may fix the attention more deeply in the closet ; but it is addressed to a more limited class, and necessarily affects our sympathies less forcibly ; for a Drama is an embodying of the present, while an Epic is only a shadow of the past. We listen, in one case, to a mere relation of facts ; but, in the other, the ruin of centuries is swept away, and time annihilated, and we

stand face to face with 'grey Antiquity.' We see and hear things which we thought had departed for ever; but they are (or seem to be) here again — in stature, in gesture, in habit, the same. We become, as it were, one of a crowd that has vanished; we mix with departed sages and heroes, and breathe the air of Athens, and Cressy, and Agincourt. Men who have been raised to the stars, and whom we have known but by the light of their renown, are made plain to our senses; they stand before us, flesh and blood like ourselves. We are apt to deny our sympathy to old events, when it is asked by the mere historian of the times; but, when the mimic scene is unfolded before us, we are hurried into the living tumult, without the power (or even wish) to resist.

Schlegel, in his acute and learned Lectures on 'Dramatic Art and Literature,' inquires, '*What is Dramatic?*' A definition is seldom an easy thing. Although we can understand what is called dramatic writing, it may nevertheless be difficult to define it correctly. It certainly does not consist merely in its shape of dialogue, because dialogue may be, and often is, essentially *undramatic*. Speeches may be shaped, and separated, and allotted, and they may be raised or lowered in expression, as the king, or the merchant, or the beggar, is presented, yet the hue of the author's mind shall pervade them all. Such characters are *not* dramatic: they have no verisimilitude: they are like puppets worked with wires, the mechanism of the brain, but little more. They may startle our admiration, or tease our curiosity, by the ingenuity of the workmanship; but we have no faith in them, and they

stimulate us to nothing. In Shakspeare (but he stands in this, as in everything else, alone) we never see the prejudice of the author peeping out and interfering — a mistake and an anachronism in the scene. He is the only one who ever had strength enough to cast off the slough of his egotism, and courage enough to lay his vanities aside, and array with the pure light of an independent intellect the most airy creations of the brain. Like the prince in the Arabian fiction, he leaves one shape for another and another, animating each and all by turns ; not carrying the complexion or tone, or diseases of the first, into the body of the second ; and yet superior even to that ingenious metempsychosist, whose original love, if we remember aright, remained unaltered through all the changes that he underwent in story.

It is assuredly difficult, and argues more than common disinterestedness, to set aside, of our own accord, our right to be heard, and to become the organ and mouthpiece of a variety of men. To invest ourselves for a time with the prejudices, and even with the very speech of statesmen and soldiers, kings and counsellors, knaves, idiots, friars and the like, seems like a gratuitous vexation of the intellect ; and yet it must be done. We must give up our privilege to dictate, and lose the opportunity of saying infinitely better things than the parties concerned would utter, if we wish for eminent success in the drama. This is offensive to our self-love ; and the truth is, that a vain man can never be a good dramatist. He must *forget himself* before he can do justice to others. We have heard it insisted, that this is neither possible nor desirable. But that it

is possible, Shakspeare is a brilliant testimony. And that it is desirable is equally certain, and, we apprehend, not very difficult of proof. A character (king or peasant) must speak like himself, or like another person, or like no person whomsoever — which style is the best, we leave to the understanding of the reader. It is true that, without much of that particular faculty which we are inclined to call ‘dramatic,’ some authors have contrived to portray one or two characters with success; but these have been generally mere *beaux ideals* — mere copies or modifications of themselves. Indeed, we have found, on a strict scrutiny, that their opinions might always be seen darkening one character, and their animal spirits gilding another; and that, whether didactic, or disputatious, or jocose, the fluctuation of their own spirit has been manifest through all the shiftings and disguises of their tale.

Schlegel, in reply to his own question of ‘What is dramatic?’ says, that it does not consist merely in dialogue, but that it is necessary that such dialogue should operate a change in the minds of the persons represented. If by this he means, that the character itself should be wrought upon and change, we think that this may be desirable; but the *nature* of the drama is a thing different from the result which it ought to arrive at. This assertion of Schlegel is therefore almost like saying, that argument is not sound (or rather that it is not argument at all) unless it shall produce conviction. In our own literature, at least, it is certain that we often find the personages at the end of the play in precisely the same state of mind as at the commencement. We make a play a succession

and change of *events*, and not a change of sentiment. The sentiment of the hearer is indeed, if possible, to be wrought upon, but not necessarily that of any one character of the drama. The character, in fact, is frequently developed in the first scene, and we have nothing afterwards to learn except as to what accidents befall it. If the German critic means to say (for he is not very clear), that the tone of the several speeches in a play should be dependent on each other—that the first should give rise to the second, the second to the third, and so on, we entirely agree with him. For the bright spirit of dialogue can only be struck out by collision; and if the speech, the answer, and the replication, were mere independent and insulated sayings, each character would utter a series of monologues, and no more.

Shakspeare (as in the case of Macbeth and others) sometimes makes his tragedy an absolute piece of biography, and allows his characters to unfold themselves gradually, act by act: he does not, in truth, often bring forward a ready-made villain, whom we may know at a glance; but we have a map of the march and progress of crime or passion through the human heart: our sympathies are not assaulted or taken by surprise, but we move forward, step by step, with the hero of the story, until he perishes before our eyes. This is undoubtedly the perfection of the drama; but it exists in its weakness as well as in its strength; and even in Shakspeare Iago is much the same person in the fifth act as he is in the first scene, and Richard undergoes little, if any, alteration.

If we were driven to a definition, we should say,

that a good drama is — ‘A story told by action and dialogue, where the spirit and style of the speeches allotted to each character are well distinguished from the others, and are true to that particular character and to Nature.’ It must involve a story (or event), or it will not have the strength and stature of a drama; for that is not a collection of scenes loosely hung together without object, but a gradual detail of one or more facts in a regular and natural way. It must have action, or it cannot be fit for representation; and dialogue, or it would be but narration. The speeches must possess character and distinction, without which, a play would be monotonous, and like the voice of a single instrument breathed through different tubes of one diameter: and that those speeches should be true to the characters to which they are assigned, and (as a consequence) to Nature, must be presumed, until we can show that Nature is wrong, or can find a brighter model to imitate.

The earliest dramatic amusements of modern times, (they were common to Italy, and Spain, and England,) were of a religious nature, and with us passed under the name of ‘Mysteries.’ In these, which were stories taken from the Bible and Testament, the characters were sustained by monks or boys attached to ecclesiastical establishments; and, indeed, the literary part of the Mysteries (such as it is) must have sprung from the same source.

Much discussion has occurred among our industrious and inquisitive brethren in learning, as to whether our Drama is of foreign or English growth. Something plausible may no doubt be urged on each side of the

question ; but we must rest on circumstantial proof at last : and, after all, the discovery would scarcely compensate for the pains that must be bestowed on the inquiry ; for the subject itself is not very important to the interests even of the Drama.

Some derive our dramatic literature at once from the tragedies of the ancient Greeks ; some from the comparatively modern entertainments which the Jews and early Christians were accustomed to exhibit at Constantinople (Byzantium) and elsewhere : others say that it originated at fairs in the ingenuity of the itinerant dealers, who thus exerted their wits to draw people and purchasers together ; while the rest (without referring to this origin) contend only that it is of pure English growth, and has no connection with any that we have mentioned, nor even with the Mysteries of Italy or Spain. Schlegel himself is, if we remember correctly, of this last opinion.

Now we can scarcely suppose that our earlier writers were indebted to the classic Grecian models ; for the 'Mysteries' have been traced back as far as the twelfth century ; and Chaucer, in the fourteenth century, speaks of 'plays of miracles ;' at which time we are not aware that the Greek dramatists were known in England. But there is a better reason still against this supposed derivation, which is, that the early English performances bear no resemblance whatever to the tragedies of the Greeks. The latter are fine and polished entertainments, discussing matters of daily life, or immortalizing events in their own history ; while the former are meagre didactic matters, taken solely from sacred history, and destitute of the chorus which forms so

striking a feature in the character of the Grecian plays. Had our forefathers imitated Sophocles, or Euripides, or Æschylus, it is but fair to suppose that they would have imitated them entirely; for the taste of the nation was not at the point to suggest *selections* from their style, nor to justify any deviation from their successful system. We must therefore conclude, that the ancient Grecians had little to do (nothing directly) with the birth of our English Drama.

As to the opinion that it began in mimic and buffoonery at fairs, we cannot understand why, if this was the case, the subjects should be of so serious a cast. It is not reasonable to suppose, that the wandering merchants of the time would strive to attract purchasers, by laying before them some signal instance of God's vengeance. If they had mimicked any thing, it would have been the manners or the follies of the time, the gesture or the gait of individuals, or things that were in themselves obviously susceptible of mirth, and readily to be understood by the spectators. But we see nothing of this in the earliest specimens of the English dramatic writers; and without this we cannot well accede to the opinions of Warton or Schlegel, and think that our drama had no connection with that of foreign countries. In the first place, our English Mysteries were essentially like those of Gregory Nazianzen and the modern Italians. We had intercourse with Italy and Constantinople; and it is known that the stories of Boccaccio and his countrymen had been brought into England in the time of Chaucer.

If there had been so decided a resemblance, in point of subject, between the 'Mysteries' of England and

the sacred Dramas of Italy and modern Greece, we should have felt inclined to adopt the opinion of Schlegel. It is known that the same ingenious discoveries have been made in different parts of the world which had no acquaintance with each other; and it would have been but equitable to have given the English credit for a drama of their own invention. But, to say the truth, the earliest specimens of English plays do not look like inventions; they are at once too complete for originals, and too rude to be considered as copies from the polished Dramas of Sophocles, and his contemporaries. The first attempt at dramatic writing would naturally be in the form of a monodrame, or a simple colloquy, and not a drama with all its principal and subordinate parts illustrating a fact in history. It is said, indeed, that the Mysteries were composed by the monks, for the purpose of supplanting more vulgar entertainments of a similar nature; yet the fact of no such entertainments having come down to us, may well excite some scepticism; for the person capable of inventing a drama, would also, we should think, be able to record it. It is true, that the most ancient entertainment at Naples is Punch, who has descended, by tradition only, from father to son, and still keeps his place of popularity, in defiance both of improvement and innovation. But Punch was not the origin of the Italian Drama; nor would the fact of his having been so, or of his resemblance to our fair mimicry, alter the question as to the invention of the English 'Mysteries.' After all, however, the matter is not important, and scarcely worth the very small discussion which we have bestowed upon it.

The 'Moralities' which followed, grew out of the old 'Mystery,' and were the natural offspring of such a parent. They were mere embodyings of the vices and virtues; and though dressed up after a barbarous fashion, made some approach to the models of the ancient Greeks; at least in the titles of their *dramatis personæ*. 'Death, — Kindred, — Strength, — Discretion,' and others, for instance, which occur in the old Morality of 'Everyman,' came nearer to the personages in the Prometheus of Æschylus than the nature of the 'Mysteries' would allow; and in the Morality of 'Lusty Juventus,' the persons of 'Knowledge, — Good Councill, — Sathan the Devyll,' and others, explain at once the nature of their offices, and the entertainment they are likely to afford. These compositions (especially the Morality called 'Hycke-Scorner') possess occasional gleams of dramatic spirit; but, generally speaking, they have little of that quality beyond what is discoverable in the romances and narrative poems of the same period.

The first regular English comedy, 'Gammer Gurton's Needle,' in every sense a very remarkable performance, is said to have been written in the year 1551; and if that statement be correct, the first English tragedy, 'Ferrex and Porrex,' which was the joint composition of Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, and Thomas Norton, was written in the same year. Our business is not now with the comedy. With regard to the latter Drama, it is remarkable rather for its even style and negative merits, than for any one brilliant or sterling quality. It has none of the rudeness of the Dramas which preceded and followed it, but stands by itself,

an elegant instance of mediocrity in writing. Without extravagance or flagrant error—without ribaldry, or any of the offensive trash that disgraced those days, it is nevertheless mournfully deficient in spirit and dramatic character. The hue of the authors' minds pervades the whole like a gloom. When Pope praised this tragedy for 'the propriety of sentiments, and gravity of style,' &c., 'so essential to tragedy,' and which, he says, 'Shakspeare himself perpetually neglected, or little understood,' he proves to us nothing but that he did not understand dramatic writing. Even Milton (and we say this very reluctantly) seems to have had an imperfect idea of true tragedy, when he calls the Greek writers 'unequalled,' and proposes them as models, in preference to our own great and incomparable poet. We have little to object to the 'propriety' of Lord Buckhurst's sentiments, and nothing to the 'gravity' of his style. These things are very good, no doubt; but we have nothing else. There is no character—no variety, which is the soul of dramatic writing. What Lord Buckhurst says might as well be said in a narrative or didactic poem,—in a sermon, or an essay. But in a play, we want true and vivid portraits; we want the life and spirit of natural dialogue; we want 'gravity of style' occasionally, but we also want fancy, and even folly: we want passion in all its shapes, and madness in its many words, and virtue and valor,—not dressed up in allegory, nor tamed down to precept, but true and living examples of each, with all the varieties and inflections of human nature,—not too good for us to profit by, nor too bad for us to dread. Now, we have little of this in 'Ferrex and

Pompey. The play is sterile in character, and with all its good sense, is a dead and dull monotony. The following is one of the most favorable passages; but it will nevertheless afford a fair specimen of the style in which the whole is written. Hermon (a parasite) is addressing the King.

— ‘If the fear of Gods, and secret grudge
Of Nature’s law, repining at the fact,
Withhold your courage from so great attempt,
Know ye that lust of kingdoms hath no law,
The Gods do bear, and well allow in Kings.
The things that they abhor in rascal routes.
When kings on slender quarrels run to wars,
And then, in cruel and unkindly wise,
Commend thefts, rapes, murder of innocents,
The spoil of towns, ruins of mighty realms,
Think you such princes do suppose themselves
Subject to laws of kind, and fear of Gods?
Murders and violent thefts in private men
Are heinous crimes, and full of foul reproach;
Yet no offence, and deck’d with glorious name
Of noble conquests in the hands of kings.’ — *Act 2, sc. 1.*

We have taken no liberty with this very edifying counsel, except that of altering the ancient spelling. The doctrine requires as little assistance.

After Lord Sackville followed Edwards, who, in 1571, wrote ‘the Comedy of Damon and Pythias.’ It has, notwithstanding its title, some things of tragedy in it; but the serious parts are nearly worthless. The style is rude and bad enough, and the play is filled with anachronisms and inconsistencies; but there is an attempt at character in one or two of the persons of the drama, which serves in some small measure to redeem

it. Aristippus is an instance of a philosopher turned courtier; and Carisophus is a specimen of the parasite plant, which we can easily suppose flourished and multiplied as readily at the foot of Etna, as on the banks of the Seine or the Thames, or on the shores of the sea of Archangel. About the same time with Edwards lived and wrote Thomas Preston, the author of 'Cambises king of Percia.' This tragedy is remarkable only for its having been referred to, as is supposed, by Shakspeare in Henry the Fourth. The 'vein' of Cambyeses, however, is but a sorry vein; and is more dull than extravagant. It would probably long since have been forgotten, but for Falstaff's allusion. Whetstone, the author of *Promos and Cassandra*, is scarcely worth a mention, unless it be that Shakspeare has borrowed his subject of 'Measure for Measure' from him; neither is Kyd, who wrote 'Soliman and Perseda,' and the Spanish Tragedy. We say this on the supposition that some other was the author of the scene in the latter play, where Hieronimo is discovered mad. There is in that scene, indeed, a wild and stern grief, painted with fearful strength, which we must not altogether pass over. The following short extract is powerful and fine.

The Painter enters.

Paint. God bless you, sir.

Hier. Wherefore? why, thou scornful villain?

How, where, or by what means should I be blest?

Isab. What would'st thou have, good fellow?

Paint. Justice, madam.

Hier. Oh! ambitious beggar, would'st thou have that
That lives not in the world?

Why, all the undelved mines cannot buy

An ounce of Justice, 'tis a jewel so inestimable.
I tell thee, God had engrossed all justice in his hands,
And there is none but what comes from him.

Paint. Oh! then I see that God must right me for
My murdered son.

Hier. How, was thy son murdered?

Paint. Ay, Sir, no man did hold a son so dear.

Hier. What! not as thine? that's a lie
As massy as the earth: I had a son,
Whose least unvalued hair did weigh
A thousand of thy sons, and he was murdered.

Paint. Alas! Sir, I had no more but he.

Hier. Nor I, nor I; but this same one of mine
Was worth a legion. But all is one; Pedro,
Jacques, go in a doors, Isabella, go,
And this good fellow here, and I,
Will range this hideous orchard up and down
Like two she lions reaved of our young.'

Besides these, there are some others who may be said to have flourished before the time of Shakspeare — Wilmot, who wrote 'Tancred and Gismonde' — Greene, the author of 'James the Fourth' — Legge, who is said to have written 'Richard the Third' — the celebrated John Lily the Euphuist — George Peele, who wrote 'David and Bethsabe' and 'Mahomet and Hiron,' and some other dramas, — and last, but not least, Christopher Marlowe. These authors, with the exception of Peele and Marlowe, (for Lily's plays can scarcely be considered within the limit of our subject,) may be passed over without further mention. The lines of Peele are sweet and flowing, but they have little imagination and no strength; and he is without a notion of dialogue. He would have written pastorals perhaps smoothly and pleasantly, but the passions were

altogether above him. One of his plays, 'Mahomet and Hiron,' is probably the source from which ancient Pistol has derived a portion of his learning. David and Bethsabe reminds us of the Old Mysteries: its style, however, is different, and it has some lines that have undoubtedly great beauty. In Bethsabe's apostrophe to the air, she says —

'Deck thyself in loose robes,
And on thy wings bring delicate perfumes' —

which is delicacy itself; nor can the following lines in the same play (describing a fountain) be denied the merit of being extremely graceful.

'The brim let be embraced with golden curls
Of moss that sleeps with sounds the waters make,
With joy to feed the fount with their recourse:
Let all the grass that beautifies her bower
Bear manna every morn instead of dew;
Or let the dew be sweeter far than that
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill.'

But Marlowe was undoubtedly the greatest tragic writer that preceded Shakspeare. The spirit of extravagance seems to have dwelt in his brain, and to have impeded him on to the most extraordinary feats; but his music had a fiery wing, and bore him over the dark and unhallowed depth of his subject in a strong and untiring flight. This poet is less remarkable for his insight into the human character, than for his rich and gloomy imagination, and his great powers of diction, for whether stately, or terrible, or tender, he excels in all. His 'mighty line' was famous in his own time, and cannot be denied even now: yet he could stoop from

the heights of a lawless fancy, or the dignity of solemn declamation, to words of the softest witchery. He certainly loved to wander from the common track, and dash at once into peril and mystery; and this daring it was which led him naturally to his sublimity and extravagance. Unfortunately Marlowe is never content with doing a little, nor even with doing enough; but he fills the cup of horror till it overflows. There is a striking instance of this in his tragedy of 'Lust's Dominion,' which seems written from a desire to throw off a tormenting load of animal spirits. There is a perpetual spurning at restraints, a warring with reason and probability throughout the whole of the play. Eleazar, the Moor, is a mad savage who should have been shut up in a cage, and the queen, his paramour, with him; and the whole dialogue (though there are some strong well-sustained passages) is as unequal and turbulent as the characters.

Of all the plays of Marlowe, 'Faustus' is the finest, and 'Edward the Second' perhaps the most equal. The 'Jew of Malta' we cannot admire, (though there is in it certainly the first hint of Shylock); and Tamburlaine, generally speaking, is either fustian or frenzy. However, the poet's idea of the horses of the sun,

'That blow the morning from their nostrils,'

is magnificent, and his description of Tamburlaine's person,

'(Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
Old Atlas' burden,')

recalls, not unpleasantly to our mind the description

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of the great 'second spirit' of Milton.* 'Faustus' is the story of a learned man who sells himself to the devil, on condition of having unlimited power on earth for twenty-four years; and Mephostophilis (a spirit) is given to him as a slave. These two worthies pass from place to place, enjoying themselves in feastings, and love, and triumphs of various kinds; and, by the aid of Lucifer they beat priests and abuse the pope to his face, and commit similar enormities in defiance of '*maledicats*' and other formidable weapons of church construction. There are many single lines and phrases in this play which might be selected as incontestable evidence that Marlowe was in felicity of thought, and strength of expression, second only to Shakspeare himself. (As a dramatist, however, he is inferior to others.) Some of his turns of thought are even like those of our matchless poet; as when he speaks of

— 'unwedded maids

Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows

Than have the white breasts of the queen of love;'

or of a temple

'That *threats* the stars with her aspiring top;'

and where he refers to a man who has an amiable soul,

'If sin by custom grow not into nature,' —

and many others. But Faustus's death is the most appalling thing in the play. It is difficult, however, to give the reader an idea of it by a brief extract — he

* 'With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies.'

must read it with its 'pomp and circumstance' about it. Faustus is to die at twelve, and the clock has already struck eleven. He groans forth his last speech, which begins thus —

' O Faustus !

Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.
Stand still, you ever moving spheres of Heaven,
That Time may cease, and Midnight never come !
Fair Nature's eye, rise — rise again, and make
Perpetual day ; or let this hour be but
A year — a month — a week — a natural day —
That Faustus may repent, and save his soul,' &c.

And now, to pass from the terrible to the gentle, nothing can be more soft than the lines which he addresses to the Vision of Helen, whom he requires to pass before him when he is in search of a mistress. He is smitten at once by her excelling beauty, and thus he speaks : —

' Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium ?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss —
Her lips suck forth my soul. . . .
Here will I dwell, for Heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee
Instead of Troy shall Wittenburg be sacked,
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colors on my plumed crest.
— Oh ! thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars ;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter,
When he appeared to hapless Semele,
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms,
And none but thou shall be my paramour.'

Following Marlowe, but far outshining him and all others in the vigor and variety of his mighty intellect, arose the first of all poets, whether in the East or West—SHAKSPERE. He had, it is true, many contemporaries, whose names have since become famous — men who slept for a time in undeserved obscurity, and who are at last brought forward to illustrate the fashion of their time, and to give bright evidence of its just renown. Yet there is not one worthy of being raised to a comparison with Shakspeare himself. One had a lofty fancy, another a deep flow of melodious verse, another a profound reach of thought; a fourth caught well the mere manners of the age, while others would lash its vices or laud its proud deeds, in verse worthy of the acts which they recorded; but Shakspeare surpassed them all. In the race of fame he was foremost, and alone. He was, beyond all doubt or competition, the first writer of his age or nation. He illuminated the land in which he lived, like a constellation. There were, as we have said, other bright aspects which cast a glory upon the world of letters; but *he alone* had that *radiating* intellect which extended all ways, and penetrated all things, scattering the darkness of ignorance that rested on his age, while it invigorated its spirit and bettered the heart. He was witty, and humorous, and tender, and lofty, and airy, and profound, beyond all men who have lived before or since. He had that particular and eminent faculty, which no other tragic writer perhaps ever possessed, of divesting his subject altogether of himself. He developed the characters of men, but never intruded himself amongst them. He fashioned figures of all colors and shapes

and sizes, but he did not put the stamp of egotism upon them, nor breathe over each the sickly hue of his own opinion. They were fresh and strong, beautiful or grotesque, as occasion asked; or they were blended and compounded of different metals, to suit the various uses of human life; and thus cast, he sent them forth amongst mankind to take their chance for immortality.

The contemporaries of Shakspeare were great and remarkable men. They had winged imaginations, and made lofty flights. They saw above, below, or around; but they had not the taste or discrimination which he possessed, nor the same extensive vision. They drew correctly and vividly for particular aspects, while he towered above his subject, and surveyed it on all sides, from 'top to toe.' If some saw farther than others, they were dazzled at the riches before them, and grasped hastily, and with little care. They were perplexed with that variety which he made subservient to the general effect. They painted a portrait, or two, or three only, as though afraid of confusion. He, on the other hand, managed and marshalled all. His characters lie, like strata of earth, one under another; or to use his own expression, 'matched in mouth like bells, each under each.' We need only look at the plays of Falstaff, where there are wits and rogues and simpletons of a dozen shades — Falstaff, Hal, Poins, Bardolph, Nym, Pistol, Hostess, Shallow, Silence, Slender — to say nothing of those rich recruits, equal only to a civil war. Now, no one else has done this, and it must be presumed that none have been able to do it. Marlowe, Marston, Webster, Decker, Jonson, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher — a strong phalanx

—yet none have proved themselves competent to so difficult a task.

It has been well said, that it is not so much in one faculty that Shakspeare excelled his fellows, as in that wondrous combination of talent which has made him, beyond controversy, eminent above all.* He was as universal as the light, and had riches countless. The Greek dramatists are poor in the comparison. The gloom of Fate hung over their tragedies, and they spoke by the oracle. They have, indeed, too much of the monotony of their skies; but our poet, while he had the brightness of the summer months, was as various as the April season, and as fickle and fantastic as May.

It is idle to say that the characters of writers cannot be discovered from their works. There is sure to be some betrayal — (Shakspeare is a wonderful and single exception in his dramatic works, but he has written others) — there is always some mark of vanity, or narrow bigotry, or intolerant pride, when either of these vices darken or contract the poet's heart: there is some moment when he who is querulous will complain, and he who is misanthropic will pour out his hate; but — passing by the dramas, in which, however, there is no symptom of any personal failings — there is nothing to be found in all his lyrical writings, save only a little repining; and this the malice of his stars may well excuse. The poets and wits of modern times would, we suspect, spurn at the servitude which Shakspeare wore out with patience. But he, rich as he

* See Mr. Hazlitt's Essay on the Characters of Shakspeare.

was in active faculty, possessed also the passive virtue of endurance — the philosophy which enabled him to meet misfortune, and to bear up against the accidents of poverty and of the time. It is to the eternal honor of Lord Southampton, that he could distinguish in some measure the worth of our matchless poet, and that he had generosity enough to honor and reward it. So much has been written and said on Shakspeare, that we will not add further to the enormities of criticism. He breathes like a giant under the loads of rubbish which his pigmy critics and commentators have flung upon him. One good editor, with a reasonable knowledge of the manners and diction of the times, would do the world a service by casting aside nine-tenths of the barren dissertation that has been wasted on the subject, and which now remains, like a *caput mortuum*, weighing down the better text of our greatest poet.

After Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher have altogether the highest claims to consideration. For, though Ben Jonson was more eminent in some respects, and Massinger better in others, they were, as serious dramatic poets, decidedly superior to both. It is difficult to separate Beaumont from Fletcher; especially as all the plays wherein the former had a share are not certainly known. Beaumont is said to have had the better judgment, (to have 'brought the ballast of judgment,') and Fletcher the livelier and more prolific fancy; but as the latter was the sole author of the 'Faithful Shepherdess,' 'Valentinian,' 'Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,' and 'The Two Noble Kinsmen,'* besides

* 'The Two Noble Kinsmen' is said to have been written by Fletcher and Shakspeare; and the early part of the play

being concerned jointly with Beaumont in some of the most serious plays which pass under their joint names, he is entitled on the whole to the greatest share of our admiration. An excellent critic has said of Fletcher, that he was 'mistrustful of nature.' We think rather that he was careless of her. He lets his Muse run riot too often. There is no symptom of timidity about him, (if that be meant); he never stands on the verge of a deep thought, curbing his wit for propriety's sake. On the contrary, he seems often not to know where to stop. Hence it is that his style becomes dilated, and has sometimes an appearance of effeminacy.

If we may believe the portraits of Fletcher, there was something flushed and sanguine in his personal complexion. His eye had a fiery and eager look; his hair inclined to red; and his whole appearance is restless, and, without being heavy, is plethoric. And his verse is like himself. It is flushed and full of animal spirit. It has as much of this as Marlowe's had; but there is not the same extravagance, and scarcely the same power which is to be found in the verse of the elder dramatist. Fletcher, however, had a great deal of humor, and a great deal of sprightliness. There is a buoyancy in his language that is never perceptible in Massinger, nor even in the shrewder scenes of Ben Jonson; but he had not a wit like Shakspeare, nor a tithe of his ethereal fancy. There is always something *worldly* in Fletcher, and the other poets of his

certainly betrays marks of the great master hand, or else an imitation so exquisite, as to cause our regret that it was not more frequently attempted.

time, which interferes with their airiest abstractions, and drags down the wings of their Muse. We see it in the 'Witch' of Middleton, in the 'Faithful Shepherdess' of Fletcher, and others; whereas we do not feel it in 'The Tempest,' nor in 'Macbeth,' disturbing our delusion; and Oberon and Titania and her crew, even when they mix with the 'rude mechanicals,'

'Who work for bread upon Athenian stalls,'

remain to us a golden dream. They meet by moonlight upon the haunted shores of Athens, to make sport with human creatures, to discuss their tiny jealousies, to submit even to the thralldom of an earthly passion; but they still keep up their elfin state, from first to last, unsoiled by any touch of mortality.

Before we part with Fletcher, we will give the reader a passage from his tragedy of 'Philaster,' that will illustrate, more than any thing we can say, both his merits and defects. Bellario (a girl in disguise) addresses the King of Sicily, on behalf of his daughter (Arethusa), who has just been married clandestinely to Philaster. The young couple come in as masquers; and thus the boy-girl intercedes:—

'Right royal Sir, I should
Sing thee an epithalamium of these lovers,
But having lost my best airs with my fortunes,
And wanting a celestial harp to strike
This blessed union on, thus in glad story
I give you all. These two fair cedar branches
The noblest of the mountain, where they grew
Straitest and tallest, under whose still shades
The worthier beasts have made their layers, and slept
Free from the Sirian star, and the fell thunder-stroke,

Free from the clouds, when they were big with humor,
And delivered
In thousand spouts their issues to the earth :—
Oh there was none but silent Quiet there ;
Till never-pleased Fortune shot up shrubs,
Base under-brambles to divorce these branches ;
And for a while they did so : —
And now a gentle gale hath blown again,
And made those branches meet and twine together,
Never to be divided. — The God, that sings
His holy numbers over marriage beds,
Hath knit their noble hearts, and here they stand
Your children, mighty king ; and I have done.'

With regard to Massinger, there can be no doubt, we think, that he was decidedly inferior to Fletcher as a poet ; but that he was a more equal writer is very possible, and he had perhaps as great a share of the mere dramatic faculty. His verse has been celebrated for its flow, we believe, by Dr. Ferriar : but we cannot, we confess, perceive much beauty in it. It is not rugged and harsh, but it wants music nevertheless ; it runs in a tolerably regular current, but it has seldom or never any felicitous modulations. Massinger himself has not much of the fluctuation of genius. We would not be understood to say that carelessness is the necessary concomitant of talent ; but merely that Massinger rarely rises much beyond the level on which he sets out. He is less accessible to passion than Fletcher and others, and is not often either very elevated or very profound. His imagination does not soar, like Marlowe's, nor penetrate like the dark subtle power of Webster. He has strength, however, and sometimes great majesty of diction. He builds up a character to

a stately height, although he does not often endow it with the turns and vacillations of humanity. 'Sforza' is the best which occurs to us at this moment, and is in some measure an exception to our opinion. We do not see anything improbable in his conduct, more than is justified by the irregularities of human nature. His wild admiration and fierce injunctions are sufficiently consistent; and the way in which he rises upon us, from being the slave of a woman's beauty to the height of a hero and philosopher, has always attracted our deep regard. His return, and his remorse too, are all in character; and though Massinger's forte is by no means the pathetic, the death of Sforza is full of pathos. He sighs forth his breath thus —

'Yet I will not die raging; for, alas!
My whole life was a frenzy.—
Bury me with Marcelia
And let our epitaphs be' —

and here death cuts short his saying; but the unfinished accents are more touching than the most elaborate and highly strained completion.

We think of Ben Jonson, almost as a matter of course, when we name Beaumont and Fletcher and Massinger. He was not equal to his companions in tragedy; but he was superior to them, and perhaps to almost all others, in his terse, shrewd, sterling, vigorous, comic scenes. He had a faculty between wit and humor (but more nearly allied to the latter), which has not been surpassed. His strokes were sometimes as subtle as Shakspeare's, but his arrowy wit was not feathered. His humor was scarcely so broad and obvious as Fletcher's, but it was more searching and

equally true. His tragedies were inferior to his comedies. He had a learned eye, and set down good things from the book; but he relies upon facts (if we may so speak) instead of Nature, and they do not provide for all the dilemmas to which his heroes are reduced.

Of Middleton it may be said, that he had a high imagination, and was an observer of manners and character; and that his verse was rich, being studded with figures and bright conceits. His play of the 'Witch' is supposed by Stevens to have preceded *Macbeth*; and, if so, there can be no doubt but that Shakspeare made use of it. The relative merits of his witches, and those of Shakspeare, have always been decided by Mr. Charles Lamb to our satisfaction. As a play, we prefer, on the whole, our author's 'Women, Beware of Women.' Leontio's speech, when he is returning home to his young wife, is a fine compliment to marriage.

Marston was more of a satirist than a dramatic writer. He was harsh in his style, and cynical and sceptical in his ideas of human nature. Nevertheless he was a deep and bold thinker; and he might have filled the office of a court-jester, with all the privileges of a motley, for he could whip a folly well. He held up the mirror to vice, but seldom or never to virtue. He had little imagination, and less dilatation, but brings his ideas at once to a point. A fool or a braggart he could paint well, or a bitter wit; but he does little else; for his villains are smeared over, and his good people have no marks of distinction upon them. Yet there are a few touches of strange pathos in the midst of his satire; but they arise from the depth of the sentiment,

rather than from the situation of things, or from any strength of passion in the speaker, either of love or pity or despair. Marston appears to us like a man who, having outlived the hopes of a turbulent youth, has learned nothing but that evil is a great principle of human nature, and mingles sparingly the tenderness of past recollections with the bitter consciousness of existing ill.

Decker had a better notion of character than most of his contemporaries ; but he had not the poignancy of Marston, and scarcely the imagination of Middleton, and fell short of the extravagant power and towering style of Marlowe. Perhaps, however, he had more of the qualities of a good dramatist than either. He understood the vacillations of the human mind. His men and women did not march to the end of the drama without turning to the right or to the left ; but they gave themselves up to nature and their passions, and let us pleasantly into some of the secrets and inconsistencies of the actual world. His portraits of Mattheo and Bellafront (particularly the former), of Friscobaldo and Hypolito, are admirable. He is almost the only writer (even in his great time) who permits circumstances to have their full effect upon persons, and to turn them from the path on which they set out. He did not torture facts to suit a preconceived character ; but varied the character according to events. He knew that to be inconsistent, and to change was natural to man, (and woman), and acted accordingly. As a specimen of the style of Decker, the reader may take the following extract. The Duke (of Milan) and his doctor and servants are waiting for the revival of

of Infelicia, who has been thrown, by opiates, into a sleep.

Duke. Uncurtain her.

Softly, sweet doctor . . . You called
For music, did you not? Oh, ho! it speaks,
It speaks. Watch, Sirs, her waking; note those sands,
Doctor, sit down. A dukedom that should weigh
Mine own twice down, being put into one scale,
And that fond desperate boy Hypolito
Making the weight up, should not (at my hands)
Buy her i' the other, were her state more light
Than her's who makes a dowry up with alms.
Doctor, — I'll starve her on the Appenine,
Ere he shall marry her. I must confess
Hypolito is nobly born; a man,
Did not mine enemy's blood boil in his veins.

Servant. She wakes, my lord.

Duke. Look, Doctor Benedict.

I charge ye, on your lives, maintain for truth
Whate'er the Doctor or myself aver.

Infel. Oh! God, — what fearful dreams!

Servant. Lady.

Infel. Ha!

Duke. Girl!

Why, Infelicia! — how is't now? ha, — speak!

Infel. I'm well. What makes this doctor here? — I'm well.

Duke. Thou wert not so, e'en now. Sickness' pale hand
Laid hold on thee, e'en in the dead of feasting;
And when a cup, crowned with thy lover's health,
Had touched thy lips, a sensible cold dew
Stood on thy cheeks, as if that Death had wept
To see such beauty altered.'

Chapman (the translator of Homer) was a grave and solid writer; but he did not possess much skill in tragedy, and in his dramas, at least, did not show the same poetic power as some of his rivals. Nevertheless

he was a fine pedant, a stately builder of verse. In his best known tragedy ('Bussy D'Ambois'), his hero will receive no human help, when dying; but says—

'Prop me, true sword, as thou hast ever done.
The equal thought I bear of life and death,
Shall make me faint on no side: I am up
Here like a Roman statue: I will stand
'Till Death hath made me marble. Oh! my fame,
Live, in despite of murder. Take thy wings,
And haste thee where the grey-eyed morn perfumes
Her rosy chariot with Sabæan spices.
Fly, where the Evening, from Iberian vales,
Takes on her swarthy shoulders Hecate
Crown'd with a grove of oaks.
And tell them all that D'Ambois now is hasting
To the eternal dwellers.'

Webster was altogether of a different stamp. He was an unequal writer; full of a gloomy power, but with touches of profound sentiment and the deepest pathos. His imagination rioted upon the grave, and frenzy and murder and 'loathed melancholy' were in his dreams. A common calamity was beneath him, and ordinary vengeance was too trivial for his Muse. His pen distilled blood; and he was familiar with the hospital and the charnel-house, and racked his brain to outvie the horrors of both. His visions were not of Heaven, nor of the air; but they came, dusky and earthy, from the tomb! and the madhouse emptied its cells to do justice to the closing of his fearful stories. There are few passages, except in Shakspeare, which have so deep a sentiment as the following. Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, has caused his sister (the Duchess of

Malfy) to be murdered by Bosola, his creature. They are standing by the dead body.

Bosol. Fix your eye here.

Fer. Constantly.

Bosol. Do you not weep? —

Other sins only speak : Murder cries out :

The element of water moistens the earth ;

But blood flies upwards, and bedews the heavens.

Fer. Cover her face : mine eyes dazzle. She died young !

Bosol. I think not so : her infelicity

Seemed to have years too many.

Fer. She and I were twins :

And should I die this instant, I had lived

Her time to a minute.'

We would not be supposed to assert that this writer was without his faults. On the contrary, he had several : — he had a too gloomy brain, a distempered taste ; he was sometimes harsh, and sometimes dull ; but he had great sentiment, and, not unfrequently, great vigor of expression. He was like Marlowe, with this difference — that as Marlowe's imagination was soaring, so, on the other hand, was his penetrating and profound. The one rose to the stars, the other plunged to the centre ; equally distant from the bare common-places of the earth, they sought for thoughts and images in clouds and depths, and arrived, by different means, at the same great end. Rowley and Field are respectable names of this period ; but, as they generally wrote in conjunction with others, we will not attempt to give them an independent reputation. We must not forget, however, that the former was the author of 'The Witch of Edmonton,' and bore for some time the credit of 'The Parliament of Love.'

Ford is sufficiently peculiar in his talent as well as his style, to call for a separate mention. His principal play, of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore,' betrays great powers of pathos, and much sweetness of versification; but they should not have been wasted on such a subject. We are not persons to put the Tragic Muse in fetters, nor to imprison her within very circumscribed limits; but there are subjects (be they fact or fiction) which are nauseous to all except distempered minds. There can be no good gained by running counter to the tastes and opinions of *all* society. There is no truth elicited, no moral enforced; and the boundaries of human knowledge can scarcely be said to be enlarged by anatomizing monstrous deformities, or expatiating upon the hideous anomalies of the species. Ford has not much strength or knowledge of character; nor has he much depth of sentiment, except in portraying the passion of love. In that, however, he excels almost all his contemporaries. He is remarkable, also, for his pathetic powers; yet scarcely for poetry, although his verse is generally sweet and tender. Some parts of the 'Broken Heart' are as finely written as Fletcher, and Penthea herself (the true heroine, after all—a pale passion-flower) exquisitely drawn. The scene, however, in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore,' where Giovanni murders Annabella, is the finest thing that Ford has done; and there he will stand a comparison with any one, except Shakspeare himself. Tourneur was the author of one or two tragedies of exceeding merit. He belonged to the age of Fletcher, and Jonson, and Decker, and was worthy of it: but his faculty, though excellent in itself, had not such a pecu-

liar cast as to call for a separate mention. He deserved more, however, than the couplet with which one of his contemporaries has libelled his memory.

‘His fame unto that pitch was only raised,
As not to be despised, nor over-praised.’

The ‘Revenger’s’ and ‘Atheist’s Tragedies,’ should have saved him from this.

Shirley was a writer of about the same calibre as Ford, but with less pathos. And he was, moreover, the last of that bright line of poets whose glory has run thus far into the future, and must last as long as passion, and profound thought, and fancy, and imagination, and wit, shall continue to be honored. There may be a change of fashions, and revolutions of power; but the empire of intellect will always remain the same. There is a lofty stability in genius, a splendor in a learned renown, which no clouds can obscure or extinguish. The politician and his victories may pass away, and the discoveries in science be eclipsed; but the search of the poet and the philosopher is for immutable TRUTH, and their fame will be, like their object, immortal.

We have now done with the ancients. We have endeavored to trace, as well as we could, their individual likenesses: but they had also a general character which belonged to their age, — a pervading resemblance, in which their own peculiar distinctions were merged and lost. They were true English writers, unlatinized. They were not translators of French idioms, nor borrowers, without acknowledgment, of Roman thoughts. Their minds were not of exotic

growth, nor their labors fashioned after a foreign model. Yet they were indebted to story and fable — to science and art — and they had a tincture of learning; but it was mixed with the bloom of fresh inspiration, and subdued to the purposes of original poetry. It was not the staple, the commodity upon which these writers traded; but was blended, gracefully and usefully, with their own home-bred diction and original thought.

During the protectorate of Cromwell, the drama lay in a state of torpidity. Whatever intellect the time possessed, was exhausted in tirades and discussions, religious and political, where cunning, and violence, and narrow bigotry, alternately predominated. The gloom of an ignorant fanaticism lay heavy on the state, and oppressed it; and humor and fancy were put to flight, or sought shelter with the wandering cavaliers of the period. The spirit of the people was bent to arms. They fought for liberty or the crowned cause, as interest or opinion swayed them, while literature suffered in the contest. Milton, the greatest name of that age, was the grandest of the poets, but he had strictly no dramatic faculty. He himself speaks throughout the whole of 'Samson Agonistes,' throughout all 'Paradise Lost,' all 'Comus.' His own great spirit shone through the story, whatever it might be; and whatever the character, his own arguments and his own opinions were brought out and arranged in lucid order. His talent was essentially epic, not dramatic; and it was because the former prevailed, and not the latter, that we are indebted for the greatest poem that the world has ever seen.

After the restoration of the second Charles, the Drama raised its head, but evidently with little of its former character. It had lost its old inspiration, caught directly from the bright smile of Nature. It had none of that fine audacity which prompted the utterance of so many truths ; none of that proud imagination which carried the poet's thoughts to so high a station. But it drew in a noisy, and meagre, and monotonous stream of verse, through artificial conduits and French strain-ers, which fevered and fretted for a time, but, in the end, impoverished and reduced the strength and stature of the English Drama.

Dryden is the principal name of this period, and he was foremost to overturn the system of his forefathers, and substitute the French style in its stead. He vaunts, if we remember rightly, in one of his prefaces, of adding new words to our native tongue ; and he certainly injured as well as served the cause of literature, by sanctioning by his example the prevalent taste of his time. The Restoration, perhaps, cherished and brought to life that bright phalanx of wits, Wycherley, and Congreve, and the rest ; but it threw our graver dramatists into the shade. Comedy flourished, but Tragedy died ; or, rather, it grew diseased, and bloated, and unnatural, and lost its strength and healthier look. It grew unwieldy, imitative, foreign. The French had studied and copied the Greek drama, and the English studied and copied the French. All fashions came at that time from Paris, and literature was not an exception. Corneille first, and afterwards Racine, who was contemporary with Dryden, lent their help to put our native dramatists out of the play. In fact, our

playwrights found it much easier to imitate the French authors successfully, than to rival their predecessors in England. To this, as well as to the force of fashion, which undoubtedly operated very strongly, may be ascribed the change in our dramatic literature. The declamatory plays of Dryden and the others do not contain a tithe of the original thought that was lavished upon many of the second-rate dramas of the Elizabethan age. The tone of tragedy itself became cold and bombastic, where it was once full of life and simplicity, and the sentiments degenerated with the style. They were heavy and commonplace, or else were pilfered from the elder writers without acknowledgment, and dressed up in gaudy and fantastic habits to suit the poor purposes of a play-mechanic. It is now well known that Rowe stole the entire plot and characters of his 'Fair Penitent' from Massinger; but it is not so generally known that his production is contemptible in comparison with the original play.

Dryden was a striking and nervous writer. As a satirist, he has scarcely been equalled. As a dramatist, he had great command of language, and was full of high-sounding phrases; but these he showered indiscriminately upon all his characters, whatever their worth or occupation might be. The courtier, the tyrant, the victim, the slave, the cynic, were equally well provided with gorgeous words, and lavished them away alike upon all occasions. Dryden seems to have had a quick insight into one quarter of men's minds, and drew out their foibles and darker traits with the hand of a master; but he could not portray a whole character, the good and the ill, and those proper shades of

the intellect, those turns and touches of passion, which have made Shakspeare immortal. On the contrary, he had an obliquity of understanding which led him to the discovery of error only. His intellectual *retina* seems to have been too small to receive the whole compass and sketch of man. If he praised, he praised in general with little discrimination; and his writings have none of the nicer touches of affection or goodness. But, with the lash in his hand, and a knave or a fool to deal with, he was an exemplary person. No culprit could stand against him.

Of all the dramatic writers since the return of Charles, Lee may be considered as the first. It is true that Otway has constructed the *best* drama, and the stage is most indebted to him; but Lee had assuredly more imagination and passion than his rival, although every play which he has written is disgraced by the most unaccountable fustian. There is great tenderness and beauty in 'Theodosius;' and great power, mixed with extravagance, both in 'The Rival Queens' and the 'Massacre of Paris,' and others. This last mentioned play, which is not, we apprehend, very generally known, shows a skill in character equal to Otway, to whom Lee is commonly decidedly inferior in that respect. As a specimen of the spirit of Lee's dialogue, the reader may take the following from the 'Massacre of Paris.' The Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine are speaking of Marguerite (de Valois), who has just left them in a transport of passion.

'*Car.* What have you done, my lord, to make her thus?

Guise. Causes are endless for a woman's loving.

Perhaps she has seen me break a lance on horseback;

Or, as my custom is, all over armed
Plunge in the Seine or Loire ; and, where 'tis swiftest,
Flow to my point against the headlong stream.
'Tis certain, were my soul of that soft make
Which some believe, she has charms, my heavenly uncle,' &c.
which he proceeds to discuss in a way to call down the
rebuke of the Cardinal upon his amour,

'Not for the sin ; that 's as the conscience makes it,'
as his Eminence says, but for the 'love.' To this
Guise replies :

Guise. I love, 'tis true, but most for my ambition :
Therefore I thought to marry Marguerite.
But, oh ! that Cassiopeia in the Chair,
The regent-mother, and that dog Anjou,
Cross constellations ! blast my plots ere born.
The king, too, frowns upon me ; for, last night,
Hearing a ball was promised by the queen,
I came to help the show ; when, at the door,
The king, who stood himself the sentry, stopped me,
And asked me what I came for ? I replied,
To serve his majesty : he, sharp and short,
Retorted thus — he did not need my service.

Car. 'Tis plain, you must resolve to quit her ;
For I am charged to tell you, she 's designed
To be the wife of Henry of Navarre.
'Tis the main beam in all that mighty engine
Which now begins to move —

Guise. I have it, and methinks it looks like D'Alva.
I see the very motion of his beard,
His opening nostrils, and his dropping lids ;
I hear him croak, too, to the king and queen :
" In Biscay's bay, — at Bayonne
Fish for the great fish ; — take no care for frogs ; —
Cut off the poppy-heads ; — lay the winds fast,
And strait the waves (the people) will be still." "

Otway, however, on the whole, seems to have shown in his great tragedy ('*Venice Preserved*') more *dramatic* power than Lee; for, although there is a good deal of commonplace in it, and more than enough of prose, that tragedy is certainly entitled to rank very high as a dramatic production. Otway's pretensions to mere poetry were very slight; and his lyrical pieces are entirely worthless. What he effected, he did by a strong contrast of character, by spirited dialogue, and by always keeping in view the main object of the play. He did not dally with his subject, nor waste his strength in figures and conceits, but went straight to the end, and kept expectation alive. It must be confessed, however, that Jaffier and Belvidera are sometimes sufficiently tedious. But Pierre is a bold and striking figure, who stands out, like a rock, from the sea of sorrow which is poured around him. He is in fact the hero of the play, and like a pleasant discord in music, saves it from the monotony which would otherwise oppress it.

Southern is less timid than Lee and Dryden, and altogether more free from blemish, but he is a weaker writer than either. His '*Isabella*' possesses great pathos, and his dialogue is for the most part natural; but he has little else to boast of. Congreve was a wit of the first water, and the most sparkling comic writer perhaps in the circle of letters; and yet he wrote the '*Mourning Bride*.' We think that, with his wit, he could not have been insensible to its defects. Of Rowe, Hughes, Hill, Howard, Murphey, Thomson, Cumberland, &c., what can we say, but that they all wrote tragedies, which succeeded — we believe. Addison's

'Cato' is as cold as a statue, and correct enough to satisfy the most fastidious of critics. We ourselves prefer his Sir Roger de Coverley : but these things are matters of taste. With regard to Dr. Johnson's 'Irene,' we must say that it would reflect little or no credit upon any writer whatever ; and that it detracts from, rather than adds to, *his* deservedly great reputation, is, we apprehend, universally allowed. The author, we believe, once ventured an opinion, that nothing which had deserved to live was forgotten. We wonder whether if he were alive, he would, (in the present state of his play) retain his old way of thinking. These general maxims are dreadfully perilous to poets' reputations, and should not be proclaimed but with due deliberation.

Moore and Lillo were writers of *domestic* tragedy, and with the exception perhaps of Heywood and Rowley, and we may add Southern, bear little resemblance to any of their predecessors. Theirs was a muse born without wings, but nursed amidst sin and misfortune, and fed with tears. They neither attempted to soar, nor to penetrate below the surface, but contented themselves with common calamities, every-day sorrows. Their plays are, like the Newgate Calendar, or a Coroner's inquisition, true but unpleasant. They give us an account of Mr. Beverley, who poisoned himself but the other day after his losses at hazard or rouge et noir ; or they admit us into the condemned cell of a city apprentice, who has robbed his master. Their characters have all a London look ; they frequent the city clubs, and breathe the air of traffic. These writers are as good as a newspaper—and no better. But

Tragedy was surely meant for other and higher things than to bring the gallows (even with its moral) upon the stage, or to reduce to dialogue the coroner's inquisition, or police reports. As in a picture, it is not always the truest imitator of nature who is the best painter ; for an artist may make an unexceptionable map of the human face, and set down the features and furrows truly, and yet be unable to produce a grand work : so is the minute detail of facts, however melancholy, insufficient in itself for the purposes of good tragedy. The Muse's object is not to shock and terrify, or to show what may be better seen at the scaffold or in the hospital ; but it is to please as well as move us, to elevate as well as to instruct.

1823.

ON ENGLISH POETRY.

WE are not aware that any successful attempt has been made to explain the nature of Poetry, or to show by what general characteristics it is distinguished from prose. Most of the discussions upon this pleasant art have been introduced with reference to the merits of particular pieces, and avoid the general question altogether. Some are occupied in analyzing the structure of the story; some in canvassing the probability of the incidents, the truth of the characters, the purity of the diction, or the correctness of the metaphors; leaving the grand distinction between poetry and prose, as well as the component qualities of poetry itself, to the speculation of the reader. With the few who have taken a wider range, it has been usual to consider poetry merely as one of the fine arts, and to compare it accordingly with painting and music and sculpture: and as this forms, no doubt, a branch of the discussion on which we are about to enter, we may as well begin by saying a few words on this comparative view of it.

In so far, then, as Poetry may be considered as one of the fine arts, we apprehend that it is undoubtedly the *first* of them; since it combines nearly all the excel-

lences of the other arts, with much that is peculiar to itself. It has the vivid beauty of painting, the prominence and simplicity of sculpture, and the touching cadences of music, while it outlasts them all. For Time, which presses on most things with so wasteful a force, seems to have no effect on the masterpieces of Poetry, but to render them holy. The 'Venus' of Apelles, and the 'grapes' of Zeuxis have vanished, and the music of Timotheus is gone ; but the bowers of Circe still remain unfaded and the 'chained Prometheus' has outlived the 'Cupid' of Praxiteles and the 'brazen bull' of Perillus.

Poetry may not perhaps attain its end so perfectly as painting or sculpture ; but that is because its end is so high, and its range so much extended. It deals with more varied and more remote objects, — with abstract ideas and questions of intellect which are beyond the reach of the other arts. It may be considered as a moral science, operating both upon the passions and the reason, although it never, strictly speaking, addresses itself directly to the latter. It operates through the medium of words, which, however inferior, in certain cases, to colors or sounds, are far more generally available, and, in fact, perform what neither sounds nor colors can accomplish. It may indeed be truly said, that the highest object of painting and sculpture has been to translate into another language, and for the benefit of a different sense, what the imagination of the poet has already created. Almost all the treasures of Italy and Greece are *copies*, made by the chisel or the pencil, from elevated fable (which is poetry), or from Greek or

Hebrew verse. That they have their own peculiar hues and symmetry, does not disturb this opinion; for the original *idea* existed entire before, and that sprang from the imagination of the poet. Painting, in fact, as well as sculpture, is essentially a *mimetic* art: but poetry is not essentially, though it may be casually, imitative; and when it is so, it is imitative in a different manner, and in a less degree. As a mimetic art, it is, in one sense, inferior to the others; but it is not limited, like them to a moment of time; and it can display the characters, the manners, and, above all, the sentiments of mankind, in a way to which the others have no pretensions.

In regard to the difficult question, us to *what* Poetry is, it may be as well to begin by negatives; and to separate what may occasionally or accidentally aid its effect, from what is truly essential to its existence.

Poetry, then, is *not* necessarily eloquence, fiction, morality, description, philosophy, wit — nor even passion; although passion approaches nearest to it, when it spreads that haze before our eyes, which changes and magnifies objects from their actual and prosaic size. Passion, in truth, often stimulates the imagination, and the imagination begets poetry; but it operates also upon other parts of the mind, and the result is simply pathos, indignation, — eloquence, or tears. *Philosophy*, again, is founded in reason, and is built up of facts and experiments, collected and massed regularly together. It is constituted entirely of realities, and is itself a thing no more to be questioned than an object that stands close before us, visible and tangible; it is always to be *proved*. But Poetry proceeds upon a principle utterly

different; and, in the strict sense, *never* exists but in the brain of the writer, until it be cast forth in the shape of verse. Neither is *Fiction* always poetical; for it deals often in the most simple conceptions, and pervades burlesque and farce, where human nature is degraded, as well as poetry, where it is elevated. Again, a *Maxim* is never, *per se*, poetical, nor a *satire*, nor an *épigram*; although all may be found amongst the writings of our poets. *Descriptions* of nature are commonly assumed to be poetry, but we think erroneously; for a *mere* transcript of nature is, of necessity, prosaic. It is true, that the *materials* out of which poetry is compounded, lie, perhaps, principally in nature; but not poetry itself. *Eloquence* or rhetoric is nothing more than exaggerated prose. Words may be strong, glowing, stimulating, and yet, even though rhythmically assorted, possess no imagination or fancy. In oratory, indeed, it may be that poetical figures are mixed up with, and lend a grace to speech; but the staple of the orator's pleadings must be prose, which he uses (or abuses) to convince the understandings of his hearers—or, at all events, to persuade them to some actual and practical end. Demosthenes and Cicero were eloquent; but no one can assert that they were poetical. They were rhetorical, vehement, ingenious: they *reasoned*, and thereby persuaded; but they would scarcely have been persuasive, had they made use of poetry, which is complicated, instead of prose, which is or ought to be single and obvious, for the purpose of convincing their hearers.

If none of these elements constitute the essence of Poetry, we need scarcely say that it is not simply

verse; although that may be useful, and perhaps even necessary to its existence. Verse is the *limit*, or shape by which poetry is bounded: it is the adjunct of poetry, but not its living principle. Neither is poetry *music*; so that to try it alone, by the laws either of metre or of tone, must necessarily be fallacious. It is well enough, as a matter of amusement, to ascertain how the lines of our great poets have been fashioned; but to deduce authoritative rules from poems that have been written without rule, is to derive an argument in favor of bondage, from the most splendid proofs of the benefits of freedom. Shakspeare most assuredly wrote without any reference to rule; he trusted to his ear, and produced the finest *dramatic* verse in the world. Milton also, beyond competition the greatest writer of epic verse of whom we can boast, learned as he was both in metres and music, and with the finest apprehension for harmony, evidently trusted to his ear alone for those exquisite cadences with which, from his *Lycidas* to his *Paradise Regained*, all his poems abound. It is undeniable, indeed, that the verse which is uniformly according to rule is the most disagreeable. We are speedily tired of lines where the meaning invariably ends with the tenth syllable: and if we admit this, and allow the poet to terminate his periods in the middle, or in any other part of the line, where is his privilege to cease? It might be rash, perhaps, to depart altogether from familiar models; but to insist that certain lines with certain accents, should *alone* be held up as models, because they produce a good effect among others of a different modulation, is preposterous. Is

it to be supposed that Milton did not know what he was about when he threw in that strange line —

'And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old' —

or when he speaks of

*'The secrets of the hoary deep ; a dark
Illimitable ocean' —*

or Shakspeare, when he addresses Earth, 'our common mother,'

*'Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast
Teems and feeds all' ? —*

Here the rhythm is undoubtedly good ; and yet we think the critics would be perplexed, were they to attempt to subdue these lines to *their* canons of quantity. What would the painters say, if an amateur should stand forward and insist on their piling all their figures in an isosceles triangle ? Yet we know that the pyramidal shape is the *beau ideal* of an artist. Variety, in short, is necessary in poetry as in other things. It is *the whole* that should be harmonious ; and it is not true that this large and effective harmony is to be attained by the absolute and exact uniformity of all its units or corresponding parts. The poets know this : and it will be well for us to leave them to the free practice of their art, instead of perplexing them with dogmas, which we are sure that the better part of them will never consent to follow. But to come a little nearer an affirmative.

POETRY is *a creation*. It is a thing *created* by the mind, and not merely copied either from nature, or facts in any shape. Next to this general, but most

correct and significant definition, if it can be so called, perhaps the best explanation is that given by Lord Bacon, where he says, that 'Poetry doth *raise* and erect the mind, *by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind*;' though here, as in all the rest of the discussion, we should ever bear in mind, that poetry, after all, is the *effect*, and not the *cause*. It does not properly *alter* 'the shows of things,' but transcribes from the imagination the new form that results from the alteration. Its *after* effect upon the reader is produced by this transcript, and he sees merely the new *poetic creation*, and receives its effects. Poetry, then, is to be understood as a thing '*different from prose*,' which is its antithesis; that is to say, it is always something different from the literal prosaic fact, such as we contemplate it with the eye of sense or reason. However it may be true in itself (and it ought to be true), as a compound image or signification of consistent ideas, it must not be in all respects *literally* true. The materials of poetry, as we have said, are to be found in nature or art, but not poetry itself; for, if poetry were strewn before us like flowers, or if it irradiated the heavens like sunshine or the stars, we should have nothing to do but to copy it as exactly as we could; and it would then be a 'mimetic' art only, and *not* a 'creation.' Prose, according to our conception of it, is in substance the presentment of single and separate ideas, arranged for purposes of reasoning, instruction, or persuasion. It is the organ or vehicle of reason, and deals accordingly in realities, and spreads itself out in analysis and deduction — combining and disposing words, as figures are used by arithmeticians, to explain,

or prove, or to produce some particular effect from established premises. It acts upon foregone conclusions, and tends by regular gradations to a manifest object; and in proportion as it fails in these, it is clouded or imperfect. Poetry, on the other hand, is essentially complicated. It is produced more especially by those powers which are almost peculiar to the poet, viz. Fancy, and the crowning spirit — Imagination! This last is the moving or creative principle of the mind, which fashions, out of materials previously existing, new conceptions and original truths, not absolutely justifiable by the ordinary rules of logic, but quite intelligible to the mind when duly elevated — intelligible through our sympathies, our sensibility — although not always sufficiently definite or settled into form to stand the cold calculating survey of our reason. It is not so much, however, that imagination sees things differently from reason as that it *uses* them differently; the one dealing with single ideas, and observing, if we may so speak, the naked reality of things; the other combining and reproducing them as they never appear in nature. Nevertheless, poetry, though creative in its principle, comprehends not so much what is impossible, as what is at present unknown; and hence, perhaps, may be urged the claim of its followers to the title of '*Vates*.' It is the harmony of the mind, in short, which embraces and reconciles its seeming discords. It looks not only at the husk and outward show of things, but contemplates them in their principles, and through their secret relations. It is brief and suggestive, rather than explicit and argumentative. Its words are like the breath of an oracle, which it is the business of prose to expound.

Imagination differs from Fancy, inasmuch as it does by a single effort what the latter effects by deliberate comparison. Generally speaking, imagination deals with the passions and the higher moods of the mind. It is the fiercer and more potent spirit; and the images are flung out of its burning grasp, as it were, molten,* and massed together. It is a complex power, including those faculties which are called by metaphysicians, Conception, Abstraction, and Judgment. It is the genius of personification. It concentrates the many into the one, coloring and investing its own complex creation with the attributes of all. It multiplies and divides and remodels, always *changing* in one respect or other the literal fact, and always *enriching* it, when properly exerted. It merges ordinary nature and literal truth in the brilliant atmosphere which it exhales, till they come forth like the illuminations of sunset, which were nothing but clouds before. It acts upon all things drawn within its range; sometimes in the creation of character (as in Satan and Ariel, &c.), and sometimes in figures of speech only. It is different in different people; in Shakspeare, bright and rapid as the lightning, *fusing* things by its power; in Milton, awful as collected thunder. It peoples the elements with fantastic forms, and fills the earth with unearthly heroism, intel-

* 'The brain,' (as Hobbes says,) 'or spirit therein, having been stirred by divers objects, *composeth an imagination of divers conceptions*, that appeared single to the sense. As, for example, the sense sheweth at one time the figure of a *mountain*, and at another time the color of *gold*; but the imagination afterwards hath them both at once in a "golden mountain."' —*Essay on Human Nature*, ch. 3.

lect and beauty. It is the parent of all those passionate creations which Shakspeare has bequeathed to us. It is the origin of that terrible generation of Milton, — Sin, and the shadowy Death, Rumor, and Discord with its thousand tongues, Night and Chaos, ‘ancestors of Nature,’ down to all those who lie

‘Under the boiling ocean, *wrapped in chains*’—

of all phantasies born beneath the moon, and all the miracles of dreams. It is an intense and burning power, and comes

‘*Wing’d with red lightning and impetuous rage*’—

(which line is itself a magnificent instance of imagination) — and is indeed a concentration of the intellect, gathering together its wandering faculties, and bursting forth in a flood of thought, till the apprehension is staggered which pursues it. The exertion of this faculty is apparent in every page of our two great poets; from

‘The *shout* that *tore* Hell’s concave,’

to the ‘*care*’ that ‘*sate* on the faded cheek’ of Satan; from the ‘*wounds* of Thammuz’ which ‘*allured*’

‘The Syrian damsels *to lament* his fate,’

to those

‘*Thoughts* that *wander* through eternity;’

from the ‘*curses*’ of Lear upon his daughters which

‘*Stamp wrinkles* in her brow of youth,’

to Hamlet

‘*Benetted* round with *villanies*,’

and thousands of others which meet us at every opening of the leaves.

Fancy, on the other hand, is generally (but not always) glittering and cold — the preparatory machinery of poetry, without its passion; sporting with sights which catch the eye only, and sounds which play but on the ear. It proceeds upon a principle of assimilation, and irradiates an idea with similes; but it leaves the original thought untouched, and merely surrounds it with things which ornament, without either hiding or changing it. Fancy seems like an *after-thought*, springing out of the original idea: but the imagination is born with it, coequal, inextricable like the color and the shape of a flower.

One of the grand distinctions which exist between the language of poetry and that of prose, is that the former (independently of its principle of *elevation*) generally presents *two* or more ideas linked or massed together, where the latter would offer only one. And the ordinary distinction between Imagination and Fancy, seems to be that the former altogether changes and remodels the original idea, impregnating it with something extraneous: whilst the latter leaves it undisturbed; but associates it with things to which, in some view or other, it bears a resemblance.

Truth was not made for the benefit of infidels, who are its foes, but for willing apprehensions; and, accordingly, it is to these only that Poetry addresses itself. It repels and recoils from the ignorant and the sceptical: the first, from some malformation or want of cultivation of the mind, are unable to comprehend it; and the latter try it by laws to which it is not lawfully subject. When Brutus, in Shakspeare's 'Tarquin and Lucrece,'

‘Began to *clothe his wit* in state and pride,’

we feel that this is not the language of prose; and that, however pregnant the phrase may be to a willing ear, it is not the sober and severe language of a reasoner. Most persons who have considered the subject, will own that it is often impossible to justify the finest things in poetry to an unwilling mind, or upon the ordinary principles of logic. And the question which arises on this discovery, is — *which* is imperfect? — the law, or the art? For our parts, we think the former. When Milton tells us of ‘*darkness visible*!’ we feel that he has uttered a fine paradox; we feel its truth, but cannot prove it. And when — in that appalling passage where the poet stands face to face with Night and Chaos, in their dark pavilion, ‘spread wide on the wasteful deep,’ and says that

‘By them stood

Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded NAME
Of Demogorgon!’

how is it possible to reconcile such expressions to a mere prosaic understanding? — ‘Darkness’ is, strictly speaking, ‘absence of light.’ How then shall we say that it is visible, when we see only by the aid of light? And with respect to the ‘Name’ of Demogorgon, which ‘stands’ by Orcus and Ades, how can such a phrase be justified by the rules of reason? Nevertheless, it is as magnificent as words can make it. It is clothed in a dark and spectral grandeur, and presses upon our apprehensions like a mighty dream. Who is there that would give up such things for the sake of logic? May not the truth be, that logic, which is the

weapon of prose, touches not the airy nature of poetry? or that the laws of reason are at present too imperfect to make the divinity of poetry clear to human capacity? It is well known that our senses are perpetually deceived, and that our reasoning faculties are incompetent to the understanding of many of the phenomena of the external world. Is it not, then, fair to suppose, that the finer intuitive movements of the mind and feeling may also escape? Assuredly, the sense which apprehends these grand expressions of Milton, is more subtle than the poor scepticism which denies them.

The mind which cannot comprehend poetry may be said to be wanting in a sense. Yet such are precisely the minds which criticise poetry the most narrowly. They try it by the prosaic laws, which they do comprehend, and set up for judges on the ground of their own defects! — Nevertheless, we do not wish to claim for poetry the exemptions of a *jus divinum*. Poetry is subject to reason — not indeed as prose is subject, throughout all its images, but *independently* of its imagery and elevation of sentiment; and it must not therefore be tried by a standard to which it does not profess to assimilate itself, nor by rules with which it is in its nature at variance. It can never be made good, and demonstrated like a syllogism.

We have already quoted several instances of poetical phraseology; but it is not alone in such expressions that poetry consists. The *idea* of a character, a person, a place, may be poetically conceived, as well as the expression in which it is dressed. Thus the idea of Milton's 'Satan' is purely imaginative and poetical, as are the

conceptions of Titania and Oberon, Ariel and Caliban, and the cloudy Witches of Macbeth. Macbeth travels from life to death, through a poetical region, as do also Hamlet, Juliet, and Lear. A chimera, a leviathan, a gorgon, the snake which was fabled to encircle the world, the sylphs and the giants, Echo, Polyphemus, Demogorgon, the personifications of Death and Sin, the ocean-born Venus, and Pallas, who sprang out armed from the brain of Jove — are all poetical. Milton's vision of Hell — Spenser's palaces and haunted woods — the Inferno of Dante — the Faithful Shepherdess of Fletcher, and her home in Arcady — the Arabian fictions, with their silent cities and blazing sights, in air and under ground; their gems and dreams of riches; their fairies, genii, and enchanters; their men turned into marble; and, in short, all that world of wonder which illuminated ancient Bagdad, or grew up like a garden of enchantment on the banks of the Tigris — are all fictions of the imagination, and, as such, have claims to be distinguished as the offspring of the great family of poetry. Again, the meeting of Gabriel and Satan, at the end of the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, where the squadron of angels turn 'fiery red' — and the stature of Satan, angry and dilated, 'reached the sky' — the speed of Puck, who 'puts a girdle round about the earth' in forty minutes — the ghost who revisits the 'glimpses of the moon' — Una, taming the forest lion by her beauty — the iron man — the fretted and wealthy cave of Mammon — must all have been poetical, in whatever diction the ideas had been clothed.

The staple of Poetry then is *imagery*; so that even

where it deals with abstract ideas and indefinite objects, it generally moulds them into shape. It is thus that certain virtues and qualities of the mind are brought visibly before us. Unfortunately, HOPE and CHARITY, FAITH, and LOVE, and PITY, &c. have now become almost commonplaces; but they were, notwithstanding, amongst the first and simpler creations of the art. In another way, mere inanimate matter is raised to life, or its essence extracted for some poetical purpose. Thus the air, in its epithet 'airy,' is applied to motion, and, the 'sunny' locks of beauty are extracted from the day. Thus the moon becomes a vestal, and the night is clothed in a starry train; the sea is a monster or a god; the winds and the streams are populous with spirits, and the sun is a giant rejoicing in his strength. Again, as the essence of poetry, generally speaking (for it is sometimes otherwise, in the case of sounds and perfumes), consists in its imagery, so its excellence varies in proportion as those images are appropriate and perfect. The imagination, which acts like an intuition, is seldom wrong; but when a thought is spread out into similes, by the aid of fancy, it not unfrequently becomes unnatural. Again, the figures or images may be repeated till they run into cold conceits, or they may not amalgamate and harmonize with the original idea. Petrarch, Donne, Cowley, and Crashaw, all men of genius, offended in these points. They trusted often to their ingenuity instead of their feeling, and so erred. Excellence is not necessarily the property of imagination or of fancy, which may be lofty or tame, clear or obscure, in proportion to the mind of the poet. Nor must we forget that poetry, which depends

at least as much upon the vivid sensibility of the writer as upon his intellect, depends also somewhat upon his discretion. When Crashaw, in his '*Music's Duel*,' speaking of the nightingale, who is contending for the palm of music with a man, says,

' Her supple breast thrills out
Sharp airs, and staggers in a warbling doubt
Of dallying sweetness' —

we feel instantly that the idea is overloaded, and extended beyond our sympathy. There are four distinct epithets made use of to express a single idea. This argues poverty in the writer, at least as much as a superabundance of imagery. So Cowley maintains a metaphor throughout a whole poem; as in the one entitled '*Coldness*,' where he begins by comparing his love to water, and goes on to show how it is acted upon by kindness and rigor, the one causing it to flow, and the other to freeze. This is the masquerade of poetry. On the contrary, when Bolingbroke goes

' As confident as is the falcon's flight,'

to do battle with Mowbray, and Æneas the Trojan, bearing a challenge to the idle Greeks, cries out,

' Trumpet, blow loud!
Send thy brass voice through all these lazy tents' —

we admit at once the fine keeping of the images. Again, when this same Æneas, diffidently inquires for the leader Agamemnon (whose '*topless deputation*,' on the other hand, the parasite of Achilles mimics), saying,

'I ask that I might *waken reverence,*
And bid the cheek be ready with a *blush,*
Modest as morning when she coldly eyes
The youthful Phæbus,'

we feel that the picture is perfect.

We have characterized certain things *as poetry*; but we must not be understood to say, that all which may fairly be called poetry is thus, word by word, impregnated with Imagination and Fancy. We have extracted the essence; whereas the cup of poetry, even at the strongest, is not all essence. But—as wine is not composed entirely of the grape—so is the rich Castalian mixed with the clear waters of the earth, and thereby rendered wholesome and palatable to all. It requires, like durable gold, some portion of alloy in order to preserve itself through the common currency. It is a Doric temple, where all is not exclusively divine, but partakes, in common with others, somewhat of the structure of ordinary buildings. So in poetry, all is not of the 'Dorian mood,' or of the 'order' of poetry, but is intermingled and made stable by a due addition of other materials. It is by these means that poetry acquires its popularity. The most imaginative writings are assuredly but little relished by the common or uninitiated reader. They require too much of the labor of thought—too much quickness of apprehension and power of combination on the part of readers to be likely to please generally. A maxim or a sentiment conveyed in prose, especially if it be such as flatters our self-love, will produce twice the effect on the crowd that pure poetry can ever hope to accomplish. Dr. Johnson's favorite lines:—

'I dare do all that may become a man :
He who dares do more is none'—

act like electricity ; yet they are neither poetry, nor, strictly speaking, truth. They involve a *non sequitur*, as Partridge would have termed it ; and were probably flung out as a plausible bait for the crowd. Even in Shakspeare and in Milton, our two most undisputed poets, there are many striking and even beautiful passages interspersed, which can claim but little distinction from prose, in regard to mere phraseology, except that they are compressed within the limits of heroic verse. Thus those two bulky lines in 'Troilus and Cressida'—

*'The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause'—*

although they present a grand, bold picture, and seem actually burthened with the words which they bear, are not, with respect to phrase or expression, essentially poetical. Even the exquisite pathos of Lear, at the end of that mighty play, when his frenzy quits him, under the influence of Cordelia's care ('Pray do not mock me,' &c.), cannot be called essentially poetical, though they are to us more touching than the grandest poetry. They are simple and unimaginative, and purely pathetic, as the situation of Lear then requires that they should be. His days of indignation and sorrow are over ; his spirit is calm and sunk ; and the winged words which became madness and the tempest, would have been out of place when his mind and body were relaxing gradually into the repose of death. In these cases, however, and in similar ones, it

must be observed, that the picture presented, or the idea originated, may be poetical, although the mere words may have but little claim to that title. Thus, in that airy and exquisite account of 'Mulciber,' in the *Paradise Lost*, where Music and Poetry run clasped together down a stream of divine verse, there is little of the strictly poetical phrase, except where it is told that he

'Dropt from the zenith *like a falling star* ;'

but the whole picture is nevertheless beautiful, and conceived in the spirit of poetry. These are a few cases, and there are thousands of others. Generally speaking, however, in the works of true poets, the phrases are glowing with Imagination or bright with Fancy, as well as the pictures presented; and we should have exceeding doubt as to the claims of a writer, whose characters or pictures only had some tinge of imagination, while his details remained couched in language which could not pretend to any other name than 'prose.'

There has of late been some discussion, amongst a few of our eminent writers, in regard to 'objects which are or are not poetical. We are not about to revive the subject at any length; but we may observe, that the art of poetry originates in the *faculty* of its professors. If it existed in nature, and a writer had simply to transcribe her appearances, *any* body might become a poet as a matter of course. But the poetical faculty does *not*, as we apprehend, consist simply in describing what is splendid already, for that may be done by a prosaic mind; not in selecting what is beautiful, for that

is the employment of taste. Nevertheless, it is true, that certain objects — inasmuch as they approach to that standard, to which it is the *aim* of poets to sublime the tamer and ordinary appearances of the world, and may therefore reasonably be considered as the models existing in the poet's mind — may so far be allowed to be the most 'poetical,' or the nearest allied to poetry. Poetry (we do not mean satire), it is to be remarked, deals with the grand, the terrible, the beautiful; but seldom or never with the mean. Its principle is elevation, and not depression or degradation. It is true, that in tragedy and narrative, characters and images of the lowest cast are sometimes admitted; but for the purposes of contrast only, or to 'point a moral.' Poetry is not constituted of those base elements, nor does the true poet luxuriate in them. They are subject to his dominion, but do not rise to his favor.

The nearer, then, that an object approximates to what is evidently the standard or the result of poetic inspiration, the nearer it may be said to approach to poetry itself. For the principle which animates the creator must exist in the thing created. The grandeur which he aspires to fashion, the beauty which he delights to mould, partake surely in some measure of, or bear some resemblance to, the grandeur and beauty which exist independent of his creation. Under this view, — the stream, the valley, the time-wasted ruin and the mossy cell — the breathing Venus, and the marble Gods of Greece and Rome — the riotous waves and the golden sky — the stars, the storm, and the mad winds — ocean, and the mountain which kisses heaven — Love and Beauty, Despair, Ambition and

Revenge — all objects or passions which lift our thoughts from the dust, and stir men into madness — almost everything which has in it a strong principle of impulse, or elevation, has a claim to be considered poetical. It is the meaner things of life, its tameness and mediocrity, its selfishness and envy, and repining, which, though subdued occasionally to the use of poetry — are too base for an alliance with it; and which creep on from age to age, recorded indeed and made notorious; but branded with immortality for the sake of example only, and trampled under the feet of the Muse.

The object of poetry is not to diminish and make mean, but to magnify and aggrandize — ‘to accommodate the shows of things to the *desires* of the mind,’ which, in its healthy state, all tend upwards. It does not seek to dwarf the great statures of nature, nor to reduce the spirit to the contemplation of humble objects. Its standards are above mortality, and not below it. Surely then, if this be almost invariably the tendency of the poetic mind, those objects (be they in art or nature) which approach nearest to the ideas of the poet, must be fairly considered as being in themselves nearest to poetry. Whether art or nature is to be preferred to the highest station, is another question. For our own parts, we are inclined to prefer art to science, and nature to art. A brilliant light may be thrown upon a pack of cards, and the fancy may play and flutter over a game of ombre; but this proves nothing but the skill of the poet in this particular instance. Is it to be supposed, that if he had beheld the dissolution of a world, or seen Uriel gliding on a

sunbeam, arrayed in his celestial armor and majestic beauty, he could have done no more? We think otherwise. Occasionally it may have appeared, that the poorest things have been exalted and made level with the loftiest, by a republican spirit of poetry; but we shall find, on close investigation, that most of these instances (if not all) are unavailable; that the things spoken of have reference to matters of higher moment; and that it is from these that they derive their importance. It is not, for instance, the '*taper*' only which throws a poetic lustre, but it is the flame which shines at '*midnight*,' and burns in solitude and silence. It is not '*night's candle*' only, but it is when the candle is connected with the time — when *jocund Day*

' Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops,'

that it rises into poetry.

With respect to the end or intention of poetry — its different kinds — and its origin, — a very few words must suffice at present, our business being more particularly with the art, as understood and practised by the loftiest English writers. It has often been asserted, that the object of poetry is, to please; and assuredly this is *one*, though by no means the sole object of the art. It is said that, although in moral poetry improvement be blended with amusement, the latter is nevertheless the object. We submit that this position is not clear. In the case of didactic poetry ('The Essay on Man' — the 'Art of Preserving Health,' &c.), the *aim* is instruction; and verse is but the medium or the attraction which the poet employs. In

satire, the object is not to please a friend, but to sting an enemy; and we presume that the poetic prophecies of the Bible must be admitted to have had an object beyond pleasure. The war-songs of the ancients were to stimulate the soldier; and their laments were to soothe regret. Poetry contains in it a strong stimulant; and although a feeling of pleasure may blend with other emotions, it does not follow that the attempts of poetry are not directed to objects different from those of merely 'pleasing.' As to the different kinds of poetry, there are so many upon each of which a treatise might be written, that we prefer deferring the reader to essays on the subject, rather than delay him at present by a brief exposition of that which he would probably wish to see treated in more particular detail. For our own parts, we are not inclined to lay extraordinary stress upon the mere structure and mechanism of poetry. It is not very material, we think, that a poem should be built up according to rules, many of which originated in the caprice of former poets; nor whether it be called an epic or a romance, an epistle or a dirge, an epitaph, an ode, an elegy, a sonnet, or otherwise. If it be full of the *material* of poetry, and contain something of fitness also, it will go far to satisfy us.

We will now request the reader's company for a short time, while we run hastily along the pages of our poetical history, and glance occasionally at the illustrious names which adorn it.

English poetry must be considered as having had its origin in the chronicles and romances of the Norman *trouveurs*, they having prepared the way for the more elaborate narratives which succeeded the crusades. It

is not material, perhaps, to inquire into the existence of rhyme or fiction among our ancestors before the Norman invasion. Our oldest subsisting debt is due, we think, to the Normans; although even *their* strains were, for a long time after their emigration here, colored by the influence of French poetry, and their measures borrowed from the French writers, who from time to time preceded them in fashioning their memorials of love and conquest. Poetry and victory seem to have accompanied each other to our shores, and to have floated upon the same wing. Taillifer, a minstrel (on the invasion of William), is said to have advanced before the soldiers, animating them with 'songs of Charlemain and Roland,' and then to have rushed amongst the opposing ranks, and perished! A single incident like this is almost enough to stir Poetry from her trance; for poetry is never dead, but sleepeth, — waiting only the touch of some Ithuriel, who can waken passion into words, and untie the wings of thought, to quit the dust and darkness of human life, and raise herself like Speculation to the stars.

In regard to the Romances and Chronicles to which we have alluded, they appear to have been a mixed brood, springing partly from tradition, and partly from legends which then stood in the place of history. That history, it must be admitted, may have arisen, in its turn, from songs and stories; for, in truth, none of our earlier historical writings, however founded on fact, can be considered as entirely independent of fable. In a word, it is scarcely possible to trace poetry very correctly upwards to its springs. Its fountains are both on Helicon and Pindus, and the waters of Bœotia are as

bright and as pregnant with inspirations as the more celebrated streams of Thessaly.

It is not our purpose here to trace the minuter steps of the Muse. She appears, indeed, to have hovered for ages over our hills and forests, before she alighted and became a denizen of the soil. We shall therefore pass by, for the present, the crowds of ballads, (some of which, however, possess great merit,) and also the works of Wace, who translated Geoffrey of Monmouth, — and Layamon, who translated Wace into the language of the period, — Robert of Gloucester and his histories of Merlin and Arthur, — Lawrence Minot and his battle songs, — Langlande and his visions, — and even by the gentle Gower ('ancient Gower'), and come at once upon the patriarch Chaucer.

There is nothing (setting aside the ballads which are of doubtful date) which can truly be called poetry before the days of CHAUCER. There were indeed verses, in which we now scarcely recognise either the measure or the rhyme; but they were destitute of imagination, and almost barren of fancy. Chaucer's predecessors were the mere pioneers of literature. They cleared the ways, perhaps, a little, by inventing a rude metre, or adopting from foreign romances a measure which became not the English tongue; but, after all, they possessed little more than a mechanical power. They cut a road, level and rugged, through the thorny queaches of the English language, but they never left the ground. They could not rise above the obstacles of the age, nor pierce through the mists that lay around them. Chaucer followed and raised poetry from the dust. He has been likened to 'the spring,' and has

been called the 'morning star' of English poetry. He was so; or rather, he was a sun whom no star preceded, who rose above our literary horizon, dissipating the wandering lights and sullen vapors which hung about it; and who, by a power independent of accident or the time, threw out a dazzling splendor, which showed at once his own lustre and the wastes by which he was surrounded. He rose upon us like the morning, fresh and beautiful, and kept on his shining way, strong, united, and rejoicing!

After Chaucer there is scarcely a name worth mentioning until the days of Surrey and Sackville. There were indeed Lydgate, who was traveller, teacher, and Benedictine monk, but little of a poet, — James the First of Scotland, who gave large tokens of promise, — Skelton, who is more remarkable for having written against Wolsey in the plenitude of his power than for his rhymes, — Occleve, a dull writer, though reputed the scholar of Chaucer, — Gawin Douglass, a spirited translator, — and Sir Thomas Wyatt, a clever and somewhat elegant writer, but who was rather the contemporary than the precursor of Surrey, as were indeed Lord Rochford and Lord Vaux.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, bears deservedly a high character in story, as an accomplished courtier, a romantic soldier, a tender lover, and a good poet. He signalized himself at Florence and at Floddenfield, and sung the praises of his 'Ladye Geraldine' in verses which it even now gives us a pleasure to recur to. He was the first writer of blank verse — of *narrative* blank verse — we believe, in our language.

Thomas Sackville Lord Buckhurst, was the author

of 'Ferrex Porrex,' (our first regular tragic play), and also of the 'Legend of the Duke of Buckingham,' incomparably the best part of the 'Mirroure for Magistrates.' The 'Legend' was known of course to Spenser, and appears to have been, to a certain degree, the model after which he fashioned his 'Masque of Love.' As this poem has been much quoted of late, we will not trouble the reader with any extracts from it. It is, however, a production of great value. After Lord Buckhurst, follow Churchyard, and Edwards, a large contributor to the 'Paradise of Dainty Devices.' The poem on 'May,' by this author, has been praised by Ritson; but it is a mere play upon words, and not a very ingenious one. His stanzas entitled '*Amantium iræ amoris redintegratio est*,' eulogized by Warton, are much better. The last four lines of the first stanza, indeed, describing a mother and her child, are tender and graceful.

'She was full weary of her watch, and grieved with her child,
 She rock-ed it, and rat-ed it, until on her it smiled:
 Then she did say, Now have I found the proverb true to
 prove,
 That falling out of faithful friends is the rēnūying (rēnēwing)
 of love.'

Next in order is George Gascoigne, 'one of the smaller poets of Queen Elizabeth's days,' but who, however, is by no means without merit. His 'Steel Glass' is one of the earliest specimens of blank verse, and about the first regular satire of which we can boast, if we are to boast of our satires at all. Of this one, in particular, we cannot say much that is favorable. We prefer his little poem to 'Philip,' his sparrow, which,

though far below the delightful lines of Catullus, is pretty smoothly enough versified. Gascoigne divided his poems into 'Weeds,' 'Flowers,' and 'Herbs,' &c. according to the fashion of the day; and under those titles may be found occasionally pleasant specimens of versification.

Christopher Marlowe is more celebrated as a dramatic writer than as a mere poet, although the song of 'Come live with me and be my Love' is well known. Besides these things, he translated Coluthus's 'Rape of Helen,' and also part of Musæus's 'Hero and Leander.' The commencement of this last poem is very beautiful —

'On Hellespont, guilty of true love's blood,
In view and opposite, two cities stood,
Sea-borderers, disjoined by Neptune's might:
The one Abydos, the other Sestos hight.
At Sestos Hero dwelt, — Hero the fair,
Whom young Apollo courted for her hair,
And offered as a dower his burning throne!'

'Some say for her the fairest Cupid pined,
And looking in her face was stricken blind.
So lovely fair was Hero, *Venus' nun!*'

Again, after speaking of the people who flocked to Sestos every year, to be present at the festival of Adonis, the poet says, —

'But far above the loveliest Hero shined,
And stole away the enchanted gazer's mind:
For, like sea-nymphs' inveigling harmony,
So was her beauty to the passers by.
Not that night-wandering, pale, and watery star,
When yawning dragons draw her whirling car,
From Latmos' mount up to the gloomy sky,
Where, crowned with blazing light and majesty,

She proudly sits, more over-rules the flood,
Than she the hearts of those who near her stood.
E'en as when gaudy nymphs pursue the chase,
Wretched Ixion's shaggy-footed race,
Incensed with savage heat, gallop amain
From steep pine-bearing mountains to the plain —
So ran the people forth to gaze upon her,' &c.

In the temple, among the multitude, is her future lover. Hero, who has been sacrificing at the altar, opens her eyes modestly as she rises —

'Thence flew Love's arrow with the golden head,
And thus Leander was enamored.'

The catastrophe of this story is known to every one.

We now come to the all-famous Sir Philip Sidney. Not unlike Lord Surrey in his renown, he was yet more of a hero than his illustrious precursor. Lord Surrey was an accomplished and illustrious patrician, the first of his age; but Sidney was a refinement upon nobility. He was like the abstract and essence of romantic fiction, having the courage (but not the barbarity) of the *preux chevalier* of ancient time—their unwearied patience—their tender and stainless attachment. He was a hero of chivalry, without the grossness and frailty of the flesh. He lived beloved and admired, and died universally and deservedly lamented. He is the last of those who have passed into a marvel; for he is now remembered almost as the ideal personification of a true knight, and is translated to the skies, like the belt of the hunter Orion, or Berenice's starry hair!

Sir Philip Sidney's poetry was not without the faults of his time. It is full of conceits and strained similes,

and the versification is occasionally cramped. Nevertheless, many of his Sonnets contain beautiful images and deep sentiment (such as the 31st, 82d, 84th, and others), though a little impoverished by this alloy.

But Sir Philip Sidney's fame was won upon crimson fields, as well as upon poetic mountains. He wooed Bellona as well as the Muses; and his last great act on the plain of battle at Zutphen, is of itself enough to justify the high admiration of his countrymen. It was one of those deeds by which men should be remembered, when the mere animal valor of soldiers, and the accidents of conquest, shall perish in the obscurity of the time to come.

We will not stop now to notice any other writers of this period, but must content ourselves with enumerating Churchyard (whose verses have been reprinted), and Tuberville (best known as a translator of Ovid) — Paynter (the author of 'The Palace of Pleasure') — Whetstone and Peele — who are the most remarkable amongst them. Then comes the great name of Edmund Spenser!

SPENSER was steeped in Romance. He was the prince of magicians, and held the keys which unlocked enchanted doors. All the fantastic illusions of the brain belong to him, — the dreamer's secrets, the mad man's visions, the poet's golden hopes. He threw a rainbow across the heaven of poetry, at a time when all seemed dark and unpromising. He was the very genius of personification: and yet his imagination was less exerted than his fancy. His spirit was idle, dreaming, and voluptuous. He seems as though he had slumbered through summer evenings, in caves or

forests, by Mulla's stream, or the murmuring ocean. Giants and dwarfs, fairies, and knights, and queens, rose up at the waving of his 'charming-rod.' There was no meagreness in his fancy, no poverty in his details. His invention was without limit. He drew up shape after shape, scene after scene, castle and lake, woods and caverns, monstrous anomalies and beautiful impossibilities, from the unfathomable depths of his mind. There is a prodigality and a consciousness of wealth about his creations, which reminds one of the dash and sweep of Rubens' pencil; but in other respects, his genius differed materially from that of the celebrated Fleming. In coloring they are somewhat alike, and in the 'Masque of Cupid,' some of the figures even claim an affinity to the artist's shapes. But, generally speaking, Spenser was more ethereal and refined. Rubens was a decided painter of flesh and blood. He belonged to earth, and should never have aspired to heaven. His men were, indeed, sometimes chivalrous and intellectual, (his beasts were grand and matchless!) but his women were essentially of clay, and of a very homely fashion. Spenser sketched with more precision, and infinitely more delicacy. He had not the flesh and fever of coloring which lighted up the productions of the other; but his genius was more spiritualized; his fancy traversed a loftier eminence, and loved to wander in remoter haunts. The brain of the one was like an ocean, casting up at a single effort the most common and extraordinary shapes; while the poet had a wilderness of fancy, from whose silent glades and haunted depths stole forth the airiest fictions of romance. The nymphs of

Spenser are decidedly different from those of the painter; and his sylphs have neither the hideous looks of Poussin's carnal satyrs, nor that vinous spirit which flushes and gives life to the reeling bacchanalians of Rubens.

The adventurous spirit of Sir Walter Raleigh did not extend to his poetry, which, though graceful, is cramped, and somewhat disfigured by the fashions of his age. It is, however, pleasant to think, that a man who had crossed the Atlantic after 'barbaric pearl and gold,' and had heard the brazen throat of war, should return to the pastures of his own country, and compose the song of 'The Shepherd to the Flowers.'

'Sweet violets (Love's paradise), that spread
Your gracious odors, which you couched bear
Within your palie faces;
Upon the gentle wing of some calm-breathing wind
That plays amidst the plain,
If by the favor of propitious stars you gain
Such grace as in my ladie's bosom place to find:
Be proud to touch those places;
And when her warmth your moisture forth doth wear,
Whereby her dainty parts are sweetly fed—
You honors of the flowery meads I pray,
You pretty daughters of the earth and sun,
With mild and seemly breathing strait display
My bitter sighs that have my heart undone.'

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Joshua Sylvester, the once celebrated translator of Du Bartas, whose popularity more than rivalled the fame of Shakspeare and Spenser, is now almost utterly unknown. It would be difficult to account for such taste, did not the absurdities of fashion render

every thing conceivable. The 'Divine Weeks' is dull enough on the whole ; yet there are parts which might be quoted, sufficient to justify the author's claim to great talent and lively fancy ; and some of his minor poems, although full of conceits, are very musical. In his '*Posthumi*,' the one beginning, 'They say that shadows of deceased ghosts,'—and that commencing, 'Thrice toss these oaken ashes in the air,' give proofs of a good ear, to say no more. Contemporary with Silvester were the famous dramatists, Webster, Dekker, Ben Jonson (who has left some delightful flowers amongst his 'underwoods'), Maister Middleton, and the rest ; and also Fairfax (the translator of Tasso), Fitzgeffrey, Warner (a voluminous writer), Constable (the sonneteer), Sir John Davis, Drayton, and the contributors to '*England's Helicon*'—Green, Breton, Bar, Yong, and others. Several of the little poems in this publication require nothing but modern spelling to suit a reader of the present age.

About this time also lived SHAKSPERE, the greatest of poets, and of men !—Leaving him as a dramatist, to his uncontested supremacy, we may venture to assert, that, merely as a writer of lyrical poetry and sonnets, there are few who can stand in competition with him. His sonnets have more concentrated thought than any other productions of the same length in our language, and his songs are to this day unrivalled. As his poems have been lately brought before the public in a very pleasant and useful publication, ('*The Retrospective Review*'), which seems doing to past ages that justice which we are aiming to do towards the present, we shall refrain from any quotations here.

We shall leave this mighty spirit, therefore, upright in his renown, and triumphant over commentary and criticism, like that attractive rock which was fatal to the steps of every ignorant adventurer, and the object of admiration to all the world beside.

Between Shakspeare and Milton lived a great number of good writers of verse. Some, indeed, have high claims upon our respect. First, there were Beaumont and Fletcher, who deserve even all their fame, and seem to have run their bright course on earth, touching and beautifying all things — sometimes warlike, sometimes jocose, sometimes grand and awful, and sometimes as soothing as evening winds, and as tender as Pity herself. What can excel the song sung to the restless dying emperor, in the tragedy of ‘Valentinian?’ —

‘Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
 Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
 On this afflicted prince. Fall like a cloud
 In gentle showers; give nothing that is loud
 Or painful to his slumbers; easy, sweet,
 And as a purling stream, thou son of Night
 Pass by his troubled senses: sing his pain
 In hollow murmuring wind, or silver rain.
 Into this prince gently, oh! gently slide,
 And kiss him into slumbers like a bride!’

Then come — Old Chapman, the translator of Homer — Bishop Corbet — Carew, a courtier-like poet — Sir John Suckling, the wit — Quarles, the puritan — Brown, the pastoral writer — Drummond of Hawthornden, a writer of excellent sonnets — Crashaw, the translator of Marino — Lovelace, the cavalier, and lover of Althea — Herrick, a writer of great merit — ‘the melancholy Cowley,’ as he called himself — and

Sir Richard Fanshawe, who translated Camoens and the Pastor Fido of Guarini. This last-mentioned work is an unequal performance ; but parts of it are full of vigor — as, for instance, the Prologue (it speaks of

‘ The woods where *the old russet Honestie*
Did live and die ’) —

The lyrical chorus at the end of the fourth act commencing —

‘ Fair Golden Age ! when milk was th’ only food,
And cradle of the infant world, the wood
Rocked by the winds ; *and th’ untoucht flocks did bear*
Their dear young for themselves ! None yet did fear
The sword or poison ; *no black thoughts begun*
To eclipse the light of the eternal Sun ;
Nor *wandering pines* unto a foreign shore,
Or war, or riches, (a worse mischief) bore ! ’ —

and the opening of the fifth act, where ‘ Carino ’ says, that ‘ the loadstone,’ which bears the ‘ wary mariner ’ —

‘ Now to the rising sun, now to his set,
Doth never lose that hidden virtue yet,
Which makes it *to the North retort its look !* ’

and other parts which we cannot afford space to give.

We had almost forgotten to mention Donne, a quaint writer, somewhat earlier than Fanshawe, as also Wither, an interminable rhymers, (he wrote, however, a glorious apostrophe to Poetry,) and Sir John Denham, his contemporaries. And these bring us to the greatest epic poet of our country.

In regard to MILTON, we scarcely know whether to prefer his sublimity or beauty. His power over both was perfect. We prostrate ourselves before him, alter-

nately in fear and love ; while he lets loose the statutes of Hell upon us, or unbars the blazing doors of Heaven, or carries us ' winding through the marble air,' past Libra and the Pole, or laps us in a dream of Paradise, and unfolds the florid richness of his Arcadian landscapes. Milton has told a story of burning ambition. He has sung the Pæan of victory over the foes of Heaven, — that ' horrid crew,' who, banished from the sky, and hurled headlong down to Hell,

' Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal :'

But he has not dwarfed the contest of the angels, by striking prone their enemies, and arming with stings and reptile tails the legions who scared Chaos and the Deep, and waged even ' dubious battle ' with the Creator and his myriads in arms.

The Satan of Milton is the most magnificent creation in poetry. He is a personification of all that is gloomy or grand in nature, with more than the daring of man. He has the strength of a giant, the fashion of an angel — ' unconquerable will, immortal hate ' — revenge that nothing can soothe, endurance which never shrinks, the intellect of heaven, and the pride of earth, ambition immeasurably high, and a courage which quails not, even before God. Satan is essentially *ideal*. He is not like Macbeth or Lear, real in himself, literally true, and only lifted into poetry by circumstance : but he is altogether moulded in a dream of the imagination. Heaven and earth and hell are explored for gifts to make him eminent and peerless. He is compounded of all ; and at last stands up before us, with the starry grandeur of darkness upon his forehead, but having the

passions of clay within his heart, and his home and foundation in the depths below. It is this gleaning, as it were, from every element, and compounding them all in one grand design, which constitutes the poetry of the character. Perhaps Ariel and Caliban are as purely ideal as the hero of Milton, and approach as nearly to him as any other fiction that occurs to us; but the latter is incontestably a grander formation, and a mightier agent, and moves through the perplexities of his career with a power that defies competition. Milton's way is like the '*terribil via*' of Michael Angelo, which no one before or since has been able to tread.

Comparisons have been instituted between our great poet and Dante; and there are certain occasional resemblances in the speeches and similes; for instance —

‘As cranes

Chaunting their dolorous notes, traverse the sky,
Stretched out in long array, so I beheld
Spirits who came loud wailing, hurried on,’ &c. — *Inf. c. v.*

And again —

‘And now there came o’er the perturbed waves
Loud-crashing, terrible, a sound that made
Either shore tremble, as if of a wind
Impetuous, from conflicting vapors sprung,
That ’gainst some forest driving all its might
Plucks off the branches,’ &c. — *Inf. c. 9.*

But Dante reminds us oftener of Virgil than Milton, and as often of Spenser, we think, in the treatment of his subject. We recollect the latter, particularly when we read Dante's personifications of Pleasure, of Ambition and Avarice (in the first canto of the *Inferno*), and

the punishment of Fucci for blasphemy (in the twenty-fifth canto), and other things similarly treated. Dante's genius seems to consist in a clear and striking detail of particulars, giving them the air of absolute fact. His strength was made up of units. Milton's, on the other hand, was massy and congregated. His original idea (of Satan) goes sweeping along, and coloring the subject from beginning to end. Dante shifts from place to place, from person to person, subduing his genius to the literal truths of history, which Milton overruled and made subservient. However excellent the Florentine may be (and he *is* excellent), he had not the grasp nor the soaring power of the English poet. The images of Dante pass by like the phantasmas on a wall, clear, indeed, and picturesque; but although true, in a great measure, to fact, they are wanting in reality. They have complexion and shape, but not flesh or blood. Milton's earthly creatures have the flush of living beauty upon them, and show the changes of human infirmity. They inhale the odors of the garden of Paradise, and wander at will over lawns and flowers: they listen to God; they talk to angels; they love, and are tempted, and fall! And with all this there is a living principle about them, and (although Milton's faculty was by no means generally dramatic) they are brought before the reader, and made — not the shadows of what once existed — but present probable truths. His fiercer creations possess the grandeur of dreams, but they have vitality within them also, and in character and substance are as solid as the rock.

The genius of Milton was as daring as it was great. He did not seek for a theme amidst ordinary passions,

with which men must sympathize, or in literal facts, which the many might comprehend. On the contrary, he plunged at once through the deep, and ventured to the gates of Heaven for creatures wherewith to people his story. Even when he descended upon earth, it was not to select from the common materials of humanity : but he dropped at once upon Paradise, and awoke Adam from the dust, and painted the primitive purity of woman, and the erect stature and yet unclouded aspect of man. Nothing can be more beautiful than his pictures of our 'first parents,' breathing the fragrant airs of Eden, communing with superior natures, dreaming in the golden sun, feeding upon nectareous fruits, and lying 'imparadised' in one another's arms, on pillows of violet and asphodel ! What can surpass the figure of Adam —

'His fair large front, and eye sublime, declared
Absolute rule,'

except it be that of Eve, who—

'—as a veil, down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses wore,'

the meekest, the purest, the loveliest of her sex. Thus has Milton, without any of the ordinary aids, fashioned a poem, which, both for sublimity and beauty, is quite unparalleled in the history of fiction. Homer was more various, more dramatic, more uniformly active, more true to the literal fact, perhaps than he, and Virgil more correct, while Spenser dwelt as completely upon poetic ground ; but there is a grandeur of conception in Milton, a breadth of character, and a towering spirit, which stood over his subject and pervaded it

from beginning to end, that we shall scarcely admit to exist in any other poet. He was, in our minds, the greatest epic poet of the world. At any rate, there is no one but Homer who can stand in competition with him. Shakspeare alone excelled them both ; but *he* went beyond all men, and stands in the array of human intellect, like the sun in the system, single and unapproachable.

The restoration of Charles the Second was fatal to poetry. That prince brought with him a long train of wits ; and large bands of exiled courtiers flocked round him, who knew the points of a ruff, and were connoisseurs in silk stockings and Flanders lace ; but of English literature they were utterly ignorant. Adversity had taught them nothing, except hatred for their countrymen at home, and contempt for their taste in all things. French fashions, French literature, French morals prevailed ; and the wholesome examples of conjugal love and social integrity were fast melting away and disappearing before the dazzling influence of a vicious court. The time of the English exiles had been employed in patching their broken fortunes, and rendering themselves agreeable to their French patrons. Had they been reduced simply to banishment, and left to ponder on the past, it is possible that they might have taken a lesson from misfortune, which would have strengthened the relaxed state of their moral constitution, and awaked them to the high gratification derivable from the works of intellect alone. But they had no example and little motive. Their king was utterly without any character, and the French did not require any sterling accomplishments to admit

them to the full benefits of their society. They were, however, compelled to turn their wit to present account; and so they contented themselves with paying court to their hosts, with emulating their gallantry, with play, and other such ordinary palliatives as offer themselves most readily to the unhappy. If our exiles ever thought seriously, it was how they might circumvent Old Noll and his Roundheads, not how they might endure philosophically, or qualify themselves for prosperity again. Under all circumstances, it was scarcely possible to avoid adopting the tone and manners of the people with whom they lived. They *did* adopt them; and the literature of the age of Charles the Second may be considered as one consequence of the exile of the Stuarts.

In a great change of this sort, however, the new current of fashion did not at first entirely destroy, although it completely discolored, the complexion of the old literature. Some writers, as might have been expected, partook at once of the fresh draughts of wit and humor brought over by Charles and his followers, without utterly forsaking their previous taste, or abandoning to dust and contempt the wisdom of their English ancestors. In this class we may perhaps be allowed to reckon old Isaac Walton, the patriot Marvell, Cotton, and Stanley; although even these writers must, if there be a question raised, be reckoned amongst the later school of poets. 'Walton's Angler,' to which Cotton added the discourse on fly-fishing, is well known; but the poems of the latter writer are not so common. One of the most pleasant, is that addressed '*To my dear and most worthy friend, Mr.*

Isaac Walton, in which, after telling him how blustering and inclement the country was, he goes on —

‘ Whilst all the ills are so improved
Of this dead quarter of the year,
That even you so much beloved
We would not *now* wish with us here :

In this estate, I say it is
Some comfort to us to suppose,
That, in a better clime than this,
You our dear friend have more repose :

And some delight to me the while,
Though Nature now does weep in rain
To think that I have seen her smile,
And haply may I do again.

If the all-ruling Power please,
We live to see another May,
We’ll recompense an age of these
Foul days, in one fine fishing day !

We then shall have a day or two,
Perhaps a week, wherein to try,
What the best master’s hand can do
With the most deadly killing flie :

A day without too bright a beam,
A warm, but not a scorching sun,
A southern gale to curl the stream,
And, Master, half our work is done!’ pp. 114, 115.

This, if not very high poetry, is very agreeable writing. Marvell’s poems are full of wit or sentiment, as the vein may be which we hit upon. Sometimes, indeed, his little plots of Parnassus are laid out rather too much in the style of old English gardening, square and formal, but they never fail in possessing something good. The heart of the poet was in everything he

did, and there was not a purer or firmer one in the world! Waller is the first writer who made *prose* sound agreeably in rhyme. He was in truth an indifferent poet, — possessing little genius as an author, or principle as a man, and obtained a name chiefly by reducing verse to ‘the level of the meanest capacity.’ But, in fact, the first name of that period which is really great, is that of Dryden.

DRYDEN was at the head of his line. As a bitter, biting satirist, as a writer of sensible, masculine, sounding verse, there is no one who goes beyond him. But as a poet, he was of a different order from those who illuminated the reigns of Elizabeth and James; and he occupied, in our opinions, a decidedly lower step. He was a writer of shrewd sarcasm and of excellent good sense, but he was deficient in imagination, in pathos, and in nature. He was more artificial, generally speaking, than his predecessors, and he ought to have been more natural, — for he resorted far more to common phraseology and existing people. Nevertheless, it is not too much to say, that he failed signally in tragedy, and that he did not excel in narrative or in tender serious poetry many of inferior reputation who have preceded and followed him. But in the *war* of verse he was in his element. He fought well and effectively; he gave blow back for blow, and knew the weak side of his foes, and launched his sounding anathemas against their characters and persons. His ‘Absalom and Achiophel,’ and ‘Mac-Flecnoe’ are each capital, are each excellent satires, though the palm must assuredly be awarded to the former poem. ‘The Hind and the Panther’ also is a fine thing in its

way ; but it differs little in point of style from such of his productions as were merely satirical. His description of the Hind, at the commencement, is delightful, (the '*many-winged wounds* aimed at her heart,' is even poetical,) and the account of the Panther —

' The Panther, sure the noblest next the Hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind :
Oh ! could her in-born stains be washed away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey !
How can I praise, or blame, and not offend,
Or how divide the frailty from the friend ;
Her faults and virtues lie so mixed, that she
Nor wholly stands condemned, nor wholly free ' —

is terse and good, and seems to have been the parent of five hundred portraits, of a similar kind.

Contemporary with Dryden was Lee, a powerful irregular writer, whose stormy verses shook the state from its propriety, and Shadwell, the '*Young Ascanius*' of Mac-Flecnoc, who swore

' That he to death true Dullness would maintain ;
And in his father's right and realm's defence,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.'

Then came Sedley and Dorset, and John Phillips, (the author of '*the Splendid Shilling*,') and Rowe, and Parnell, (who wrote the '*Hermit*') — and witty Dr. Garth, and Addison, so great in prose and so little in poetry — and lively laughing Mat. Prior, to whom the world was a joke — then followed Vanbrugh and Congreve, the brilliant twins of Comedy, and Gay, (who reduced folly to a fable, and wrote '*Black-eyed Susan*,') and the '*Beggars*' Opera,) and lastly, the

better known and more justly celebrated Alexander Pope.

POPE was a fit successor for the chair of Dryden. He had the same good sense, the same stinging sarcasm; the same hatred of what is base or mean, with something more of refinement, and a clearer moral view than can perhaps be ascribed to his predecessor. Each, however, belonged to his age, and illustrated it finely. Dryden would have been out of place at the court of Queen Anne, and Pope could not easily have reconciled himself to the coarse gallants and lascivious wits of the Restoration. The one had a strong arm and a fearless spirit, and struck down whole squadrons of rogues and politicians, with all the indignation of a moralist, and the rancor of a partisan. The other shot his sharp arrows at the heart of the proud man and the knave, the time-server and the hypocrite, (whether hidden in an alias or covered with lawn) — he spared neither sex, nor rank, nor age, so it were impudent and profligate — but wisely thought, that if a reformation in morals was to be effected, it must be effected by example, — not of the poor, but of the high-born and opulent. This led him amongst the aristocracy of his time; and he whipped the gilded follies and humble sins of the wealthy, with as much good will and more honesty than the magistrates of our time exercise their summary justice upon the petty offenders who sell cabbages and beef upon the Sabbath. Pope, in a word, was a first-rate writer of the same genius as Dryden, and upon the whole his equal. His poems contain passages of great pathos, of piercing satire, and of admirably turned compli-

ment; and his 'Rape of the Lock' has never yet been equalled.

Next to Pope we may record Swift, a stern, shrewd, sarcastic writer of verse, and a 'fellow of infinite humor.' There were two sides, however, to the Dean's character, one of which we do not desire at present to contemplate: but the other was rich and bright as the genius of wit could make it. After him we find the name of Thomson, who looked on Nature with an observant but easy eye, and transcribed her varying wonders. His 'Seasons,' contain more popular things than any of his other poems, (although he but too frequently amplifies a simple fact, till you scarcely know what he is about,) but there is a much more equal power, and far more pure poetry in his delightful, 'Castle of Indolence.' It was here that he built up these shadowy battlements, and planted those 'sleep-soothing' groves, under which lay

'Idlesse, in her dreaming mood.'

It was here that he wove in his poetic loom those pictures of pastoral quiet — of flowery lawns and glittering streams — of flocks and tranquil skies, and verdant plains,

'And vacant shepherds piping in the dale' —

the stockdove and the nightingale, and the rest of that tuneful quire which lull our minds into forgetfulness, and sing to us on summer mornings and winter nights, in town and in country equally well, until we forget the prose of human life in its romance, and bathe our fevered senses in the fresh flowers of poetry which the bounty of Thomson has bequeathed to us! There is

nothing in the history of verse, from the restoration of Charles the Second to the present time, (not even in Collins, we think, and certainly not in Gray,) which can compete with the first part of the 'Castle of Indolence.' His account of the land of 'Drowsy-head,' and

'Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,'

of the disappearance of the sons of Indolence, with the exquisite simile with which it closes — the huge covered tables, all odorous with spice and wine — the tapestried halls and their Italian pictures — the melancholy music — and altogether, the golden magnificence and oriental luxuries of the place, and the ministering of the spirits who

'Poured all the Arabian heaven upon our nights,'

(an exquisite line) — may stand in comparison with almost anything in the circle of poetry.

We must not forget, in our list, Doctor Young, whose 'Night Thoughts,' have acquired at least as much reputation as they deserve — nor the unfortunate, and not very deserving Richard Savage, nor Cibber, the prince of coxcombs — nor Churchill, a coarse satirist — nor Shenstone, fine and finical, though with touches of tenderness and beauty, especially in his sweet Spenserian stanzas of 'The Schoolmistress.' After him came Mark Akenside, Armstrong, excellent Goldsmith, and Gray, and his satellite Mason. Of these, and indeed of most of the other modern writers of verse, so much has been said in various places, that we shall not now trouble the reader with any further discussion on the subject. In the same manner also must we

now pass over the few remaining names on the poetic roll, with the exception of Warton, and Cowper, and finish our task by merely reminding the reader of the illustrious name of Burns !

1825.

A DEFENCE OF POETRY.

THE advocates of Utility have long been in the habit of decrying Poetry, and have lately renewed their attacks on it with increased bitterness and vehemence. They have discovered, it seems, not only that it is of no earthly use, but that it actually does a great deal of mischief, induces us to disregard truth and admire falsehood, to indulge in exaggerated sentiment, and to weaken the authority of reason over passion and imagination. As to its positive evils, we believe we need not concern ourselves much: but there are many people who really seem to think that it must be acknowledged that poetry is of no use; and consequently that, if at all to be tolerated in an industrious community, it ought to meet with no encouragement, and be treated with no respect. The short answer to this is, to ask what is here meant by 'being of use,' and whether anything that gives *pleasure* may not properly be called useful? Unless we are to stop at the mere necessities of life, it would be difficult to dispute this; and, after all, if life itself was not a *pleasure*, the utility even of its necessities might very well be questioned. Even the rigorous definition of the proper object of all

virtuous exertion, according to the utilitarians themselves — viz. the greatest happiness of the greatest number — obviously involves the consideration of pleasure and enjoyment, and makes this enjoyment, as indeed it truly is, the measure and test of utility. In what sense, then, can it be said that poetry is of no use to mankind, if it is admitted that it affords the most intense delight to great multitudes among them, and has always been recognised as a copious and certain source of enjoyment, in all conditions of life, and all stages of society ? The only replication must be, that the pleasures it brings are accompanied by greater pains, or that the pursuit of them leads to the neglect of higher duties, or, what is the same thing, to the exclusion of still greater pleasures. We do not think, however, that this can be even plausibly pretended ; and we do not observe that the champions of utility have ever seriously taken that ground. The truth is, that their irreverence to the Muses is much more a matter of habit and feeling with them than of reasoning ; and though attired occasionally in logical forms, proceeds in the main from mere prejudice and ignorance.

It frequently happens that circumstances direct the mind to the contemplation of truth in opposite directions. The faculties of men are practically developed in the exercise of their various pursuits, and the whole force of their intellect is generally exhausted in limited and particular investigations ; and this necessarily detracts from their power of judging of arts and sciences alien to their own. It is thus that the great value placed on mathematical studies becomes not unfrequently a subject of doubts to a theologian or a moral-

ist; while the excellence of poetry or art is questioned in its turn, by the utilitarian or the legislator.

In all probability, it is with the mind as with the body; some limbs or sinews are occasionally kept in severe exercise, to the neglect of the rest; and the consequence is, that the one set gains strength and flourishes, while the other has a tendency to weaken or decay. Thus the Reason of some men is cultivated, to the utter extinction of the Imagination; though it is but fair to suppose that the latter faculty was bestowed upon us for *some use or purpose*, equally with the former — the only question is, how to employ it profitably.

The motives which tempt a mere reasoner, a mathematician, or political economist, to abase the character of poetry, are, it must be allowed, as obvious as those which induce a writer of verse to exalt it. There is no sympathy with its pleasures in the one, while there is an over-wrought and interested admiration in the other. The former cannot be said, indeed, to be absolutely without the faculty of imagination, but it may be averred that he possesses it in a latent or undeveloped state; and we suspect that he cannot *thoroughly* understand the operations of a power which he himself has never individually felt. He sees only the ultimate consequence, without witnessing or experiencing the progress of the idea in the mind. He perceives what the imagination *has* produced, but is unable to judge of the impulse, or to speculate, otherwise than imperfectly, upon what it may produce hereafter.

Leaving the question, however, as to what this faculty may cause to be produced, or what a great poet

may do, who shall task his powers to the uttermost, or wait patiently and sincerely for the illuminations of his imagination, it is enough to affirm that it *exists*. It is a POWER (and no mean one) not to be despised or neglected, but to be cherished and *used* like any other power, for purposes beneficial to mankind. The most inveterate utilitarian would hesitate, we apprehend, to yield up any one nerve or fibre of the human frame, however useless it might, at first sight, appear to him to be. He would calculate wisely on the chance of its becoming at one time or other serviceable, and would be not without some misgivings as to the fallibility of his own particular opinions. Why then should the imagination (a subject at least as mysterious and important) be entitled to less consideration than a nerve or a sinew? 'It is a folly,' as Montaigne thinks, 'to measure truth or error by our own capacity;' and we think so too.

As, therefore, the imagination is an existing power, — as it has given birth to numerous works, some of which have had a prodigious effect upon the habits of thinking and even upon the moral conduct of men, — it is not the part of a philosopher (however little he may be under its influence) to despise it. It is to be used or misused, but not neglected nor contemned; for it can no more be extinguished than the mind of man. Ethical and political philosophy and mathematics are now held to be the master sciences; and unquestionably they are most important ones. But there are other arts and sciences nearly as important, some of which are connected or collateral with those now mentioned, and some which may be said to be

altogether independent of them. Amongst the first or collateral arts, must undoubtedly be reckoned POETRY. It is, in the words of the great philosopher, 'subservient to the Imagination, as Logique is to the Understanding;' * and its *office*, '(if a man weigh well the matter) *is no other than to apply and commend the dictates of Reason to the Imagination, for the better moving of the Appetite and the Will.*' Being an ally of reason and logic, therefore, as Lord Bacon says, it should not be treated as a foe, nor despised as a thing insignificant.

If man were merely an intellectual being, subject only to be influenced by pure reason, there might be some ground, perhaps, for maintaining that poetry was, strictly speaking, useless. A code of laws might then probably be framed, excluding this delightful art from the commonwealth of letters, and substituting we know not what intellectual pleasure in lieu of it. But this most certainly neither is, nor can ever be, our condition. We are not Houyhnhnms, but men; and we must seek the gratification, as well as guard against the abuse, of all the faculties with which we are actually gifted. In the formation of a system, a wise man will consider what *has* been, as well as what *may* be; for wisdom is little else than a synonyme for experience, and the future must always be built up from the past. It is desirable, therefore, to consider not only the value of the qualities with which we propose to endow any creature, but also the capacity of the creature to receive them. What should we think if some philosopher from the Ottomaques, or some follower of Brahma, should

* Lord Bacon's *Instauratio Magna*, lib. vi. c. 3.

come hither, and insist—the one, that it would be more nutritious, the other, that it would be more virtuous, if we were for the future to feed upon pipe-clay mixed with oxyd of iron? * We should scarcely respect even the zeal of one of our Christian missionaries, were he to attempt to extend the benefit of the Scriptures to any of the tribe of *Simiæ*, the Chimpansé, or the Pongo. It is true, that there is not so great a distinction amongst men as between men and mere animals; yet the difference between the white race and the other varieties of the human species, is greater than can be accounted for by climate or accident. Nay, amongst ourselves distinctions are very obvious. We are not all mathematicians, or philosophers, or moralists, or poets. The human mind has certain defects, (so called,) and is liable to extraordinary changes. Its transitions, from vice to virtue, from equanimity to despair, have astonished all but the most profound philosophers. It is, in truth, made up of good and evil impulses; of faculties which employ themselves in poetry and prose,—in other words, of *Imagination* and *Reason*, &c.; it is full of affections, of passions, of powers, infirmities, and errors of all sorts, which are to be combated with and *directed*, but can never be altogether extirpated. It has its springs and movements which obey the warnings of reason, and others which are subject to the ‘skiey influences’ of poetry; and these act sometimes independently, sometimes in unison with each other. The object of Logic (which is the voice of reason) is to act for good purposes upon the intellect. The end of Poetry

* Humboldt, *Tab. Phys. des Régions Equatoriales*.

is, 'to fill the Imagination with observations and resemblances, which MAY SECOND REASON, and not oppress and betray it; for these abuses of arts come in but *ex obliquo*, for prevention, not for practice.' * All this being the case, it seems that all speculations for putting down poetry must necessarily be vain and useless. They are formed, perhaps, for man as he ought to be; but certainly not for man as he is. They are, in short, like that Dream of Plato, which has remained a dream and nothing more for the space of two thousand years. That celebrated Greek denied admittance to a poet in his ideal republic; and his republic has remained ideal.

In addition to all this, it may be further argued, that there are certain gradations in society which require different employments. There are the rude, the civilized, and the luxurious or refined. The human mind in one state cannot digest what it is eager for in another. In rude society the mechanic and agriculturist are the most important characters. Afterwards, the legislator and the moralist insist upon precedence; and, finally, the poet is elevated into renown. If, after all, it be asked, what is the important science? the answer is, probably — *all*. It is not sufficient to say, in opposition to the claims of the poet, that the state of refinement is the most unnatural, or that poetry is a luxury and a delusion only, and consequently little better than a vice. For luxury is bad only, in so far as it injures the moral constitution of a people. Poetry, perhaps, may be considered as a luxury — we shall not dispute about terms; but so are all the products of all the arts and

* Lord Bacon's *De Augmentis Scientiarum*.

sciences. Our very houses are a great luxury, and all that they contain — and most of our food and our dress also. There is not a single comfort that we enjoy which is not liable to this imputation. We have all something beyond what absolute necessity requires.

———— ‘ Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest things superfluous.’

But shall we therefore abandon every luxury, every comfort? There is, we think, at least as much of vice and folly, in spurning at the beneficence of Nature, as in receiving the gifts which she bestows on us, readily, and using them with discretion.

Poetry, then, is not to be reprehended as a pernicious delusion, till it is proved that its general purposes are bad; and certainly, this is not generally true, but the reverse, inasmuch as it exhibits for the most part a high standard of perfection, and puts forward illustrious examples of worth and courage. And yet these, although they soar perhaps a little beyond the level of ordinary minds, do not rise above *some* instances of excellence which the history of the world has afforded. We read of no one, in tragedy or epic, who has surpassed Epaminondas, Phocion, or Aristides, — Cymon, or Brutus, or Timoleon, — Socrates or Solomon, — Alfred, Shakspeare, Bacon, Sir Philip Sidney, or Bayard, in their several ways, for virtue or intellect, or noble disinterested heroism. It may be asserted, indeed, after all, that poetry is no more a fiction, than are certain maxims of law and state, which have been engrafted on the severest and most practical of the sciences, in order the better to enforce or illustrate

some of their most important doctrines. Nor is it more a delusion — even when it holds up a picture of ideal excellence — than any prose Atlantis or Utopia, which has been devised, not only to increase our admiration of virtue, but for practical and direct imitation. Nay, might not the same charge be brought against any scheme of moral and political good, which might be drawn out for the benefit of mankind at the present moment — a state of things desirable, it may be, for a moralist or a legislator, but as utterly unadapted, *in its whole extent*, as poetry itself, to the passions and affections of human nature? Doubtless such a scheme would contain in it many elements of wisdom; much of what is good, and much of what is prudent; and so also does poetry. But there is probably *another* aspect to the science, as well as to the art; in which some blemishes may be detected, and some maxims, which, when reduced to practice, might put to confusion the supporters of the theory.

It is not often that the mind addicts itself, for any length of time, to a pursuit that is wholly useless. The cultivation bestowed so generally, and so unsparingly, upon the reasoning faculties, forbids such a supposition; and the experience of the world contradicts it. In poetry, more particularly, such a charge seems altogether presumptuous, considering the character and fortunes of many of those who have been professors of that art. Is it reasonable to think that Chaucer, and Shakspeare, and Milton, (the last a legislator and politician,) should have cast away their lives, and expended such treasures of intellect upon an art that

was properly the subject of contempt? * Could they, who saw the faults and follies of all the world beside, discern none in themselves? Did they feel that their pursuits were nugatory—their talents misdirected—their lives useless? Or, was it, indeed, that these great men were really *admirers*, as well as professors of their art, — not following it from necessity, or the love of gain, but from motives as pure, and an ambition as lofty, as ever stimulated the legislator or the moralist? This, in fact, *was* the case. They were disciples of the Muses in their youth, and followed the profession which they had adopted from manhood to the grave. There is not one of them who has not left on record his reverence for poetry. There is not one who has not been the free champion of his art, as well as the disinterested friend of man; bequeathing to posterity his labors and his fame, and reaping, in return, its gratitude — for learned precepts, for brilliant models; for *wisdom* fashioned in a thousand shapes, and applicable to all uses; for *moral axioms* and witty sayings; for characters full of *exemplary virtue*; for

* Who can forget the brilliant testimony of Swift?

‘Not Empire, to the rising sun,
By valor, conduct, fortune won;
Not greatest wisdom in debates,
Or framing laws for ruling states,
Such heavenly influence require
As how to strike the Muse’s lyre.’

And by whom is this uttered? — by the sternest, severest, most sarcastic of all modern writers — by the bitter satirist, the cunning politician, the worldly, ambitious, scoffing Dean of St. Patrick’s.

fiction full of truth; in a word, for images at once instructive and beautiful, which leave their outlines indelibly upon the memory, when the bare precept or abstract truth would have vanished and been forgotten.

Precept is assuredly not the only way by which knowledge may be communicated; nor is it always the best. It may be communicated by example—often more effectually, and sometimes where precept will not operate. The folly of ambition and jealousy may surely be seen, not without advantage, in the dramas of Shakspeare. The double lesson which is taught by *Lear*, the beautiful fidelity of *Imogen*, the hate and prodigality of *Timon*, are *truths* from which we derive something. In these, and similar stories, we see the *effect*, a material part of instruction, where practical wisdom is to be inculcated, and one which mere precept unfortunately wants. Besides, after all, precept is only secondary knowledge, being itself derived from facts. It is only the inference which the observation of man has deduced from certain established premises—and why may it not be equally, or even more beneficial, to go at once to the fountain-head of knowledge,—to the fact, or to a true representation of the fact,—instead of contenting one's self with the wisdom which has been distilled and extracted, perhaps discolored, by other minds? Again, there is a large class of persons, who will read a poem or go to a play, but who will not sit down to the perusal of a dry essay, or examine the merits of a logical argument, respecting some metaphysical or moral question. The mere desire of acquiring knowledge, influences but a very limited portion of mankind; the

desire to arrive at moral truth operates, we fear, upon even a less number; and where these impulses are wanting, something, we suspect, must be held out to allure the understanding to its own improvement, — something, in which there shall be sufficient of information to render the acquisition gratifying to the vanity, and enough of pleasure to satisfy the senses.

In history, the object is to teach through experience and example. But is not this also the case with fiction and poetry? If it be replied here, that the two latter are illusory, we may retort the question of — Is history much less so? What history, in fact, is there, which is not replete with partiality, and in other respects erroneous? This must necessarily be the case, and to a much greater extent than we can possibly be aware of. In the first place, it is a work composed either by a person, who is himself living amongst, and tainted by the prejudices of the age, or else by one who writes at a distant date, when he is without ocular proof or oral testimony, and is left to guess between the jarring or imperfect accounts of partial contemporaries. In order to there being a perfect historian, there must be an eye-witness, and an impartial man; and no person, with such qualities united, has hitherto appeared. It is curious, and a little instructive too, in this view of the subject, to see how so able a man as Hume could rail, in his private letters, at the partiality and deficiency of historians, and afterwards write such an account as he has written of the degenerate house of Stuart. The truth is, that there is often as much of fiction in history as in poetry, without the sincerity of the fiction being apparent. It has been said, to be sure, that the characters of the

former are 'real,' and therefore '*instructive*,' while those of the latter afford merely amusement. But are the characters of history sufficiently perfect to tempt us to imitation? We fear not. Neither is the moral effect (except in very rare instances) so obvious as in the latter case, where the cause and the consequence, the 'bane and the antidote,' are both before us, displaying, for our edification, the natural progress of individual history, — the temptation, the crime, and the punishment. Fiction, it is true, is, (as its name imports,) in a certain sense, less 'real' than history; that is to say, it goes more beyond common every-day facts; and it is not without intention that it does so. It is like a lofty mark, which we cannot strike without discipline and exercise. Were it easy to touch, and only of the ordinary height, its object would altogether be lost.

Poetry, so far as it enervates the mind, is assuredly injurious. But it generally *stimulates* the mind; and whether it stimulates it to good or ill, must depend upon the individual qualities of the poets themselves. It may be argued, indeed, that there is no need of *any* impulse; but we suspect that the moral, like the physical constitution, requires stimulants at least as often as sedatives. That these stimulants almost invariably impel the mind to error, (for something like this is asserted,) is a maxim founded upon partial instances and replete with untruth. We deny that it is so. In fact, so far as we can recollect instances of poetry having been brought in to participate with politics, there have always been two bands of partisans, as well as two sides, to the question at issue. If there has been a phalanx of rhymers on the one side, there has always been a battalion of poets on the

other. Some of the greatest names in our literature shine equally as patriots and poets, and most of them have belonged to writers who have done what they could to discountenance hypocrisy and ward off oppression, whether on the part of the king or of the aristocracy. Let us recollect the characters of only three great men amongst our poets, Milton, Marvell, and Pope, and hasten to rescind so unqualified and unjust a judgment.

If poetry be bad and useless in its principle, it must necessarily have been so always ; for it is not subject to change, being founded on certain established principles which are beyond the influence of fashion and caprice. In that event, the great works of Shakspeare must be set down as useless and bad, as well as all the parables of the Bible ; all fiction, all dialogue, (except such as has actually occurred,) all illustration, all the satires of Juvenal and Pope, of Cowper and others, against vice and folly ; many of the didactic writings of the poets, and all fables, even the most moral. So it appears to those who are merely logicians, and on whom an image makes less impression than an axiom. They deny the utility of poetry, by asserting that whatever of good it has produced, might have been produced equally well or better in prose.* But this

* The converse of this proposition is frequently true. ' Even our Saviour could as well have given the moral commonplaces of uncharitableness and humbleness, as the divine narration of Lazarus and Dives ; or of disobedience and mercy, as the heavenly discourse of the lost child and gracious father ; but that his thorough-searching wisdom knew that the estate of Dives burning in hell, and of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom,

never *has* been done hitherto; and it is by no means clear that the mind which has thrown out certain ideas in poetry, could have done as much in prose; for the impulse, which occasioned it so to shape those ideas, would have been wanting. There are certain minds which naturally exercise themselves in poetry, and delight in it, and can only get at their best ideas by means of imagery and association, as others do by calm meditation or methodical inference. So also there seem to be corresponding intellects, which can only perceive the beauty of truth and virtue, or feel the wretchedness of guilt, when their imaginations had been roused by the power of poetry, or wrought upon by the stimulating example of fiction.

Considered even as an unobjectionable *amusement*, poetry keeps up our intercourse with hope and pleasure; it brightens the spirits and improves and enlarges the heart. Though pent up in smoky rooms, and tasked to irksome employments, we yet live out of doors with the poets, among leaves and flowers, and balmy winds and azure skies. We wander through trackless woods, beneath oaks and branching elms, 'star proof.' We lie down by sparkling fountains, and listen to the voice of murmuring rivers, and forget our cares and ills, the pains of sickness, and poverty, and neglect, in the unchequered beauty of a delightful dream.

Neither is the relapse hurtful; for our visions are never (in the injurious sense) delusions. We do not

would more constantly, as it were, inhabit both the memory and the judgment. — Sir P. Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*.

believe in the actual existence of the things which pass thus soothingly across the surface of our imagination. We feel that they are resemblances, not falsehoods; and these are just sufficient to abstract us awhile from the realities, to which we return refreshed by an excursion into the wilderness of thought; not fatigued and disappointed, as we might have been, had we reckoned upon the permanency of the delight. They form, in fact, a wholesome cessation from our reasoning habits, like sleep, or a quiet landscape; but enjoyed when sleep will not come to us, and when there is no beauty of landscape actually near, to relieve the fatigue of our brain, or induce pleasurable and gentle emotions.

But poetry has been always something *more* than a mere amusement. It was through the channels of poetry that much of our knowledge originally came; and, as Sir Philip Sidney has said, 'they go very near to ungratefulness, who seek to deface that, which in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath been the *first* light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk, by little and little, enabled them to feed on tougher knowledge.' It was the habit of association, which forms the principal part of the complex faculty of the imagination, that may be said to have led to various discoveries in science, and to have furnished Bacon with his luminous illustrations in philosophy. These advantages must not be forgotten: neither must the good effect of poetry upon the memory be passed over; the more especially as Mr. Bentham himself has afforded us some evidence on that point. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of republishing the poetry of so formidable a coadjutor who has practically testi-

sied to the 'utility' of verse, by actually composing three couplets; for the purpose, as he states, of '*lodging more effectually in the memory certain points on which the whole fabric of morals and legislation may seem to rest.*'*

There is one more point which we would fain remark upon, before we quit this part of the subject. It is said that, in the pursuit of the severer Sciences, certain '*ideas*' may at least be gained to recompense the student for his labors; while it is insinuated, that no such compensation is yielded to the follower of Poetry. We must deny this altogether. It is as much an '*idea*,' and an idea as valuable, to gain a knowledge of the movements of the human mind, — to see how it is affected by certain causes, and how it adapts itself to various contin-

* In Mr. Bentham's valuable book on *Morals and Legislation*, under chapter IV., which bears the title of '*Value of a Lot of PLEASURE or PAIN, how to be measured,*' he says, that to a person considered *by himself*, the value of pleasure or pain, considered *by itself*, must be measured according to — 1st, Its intensity; 2d, Its duration; 3d, Its certainty or uncertainty; 4th, Its propinquity or remoteness. And in a subsequent edition he adds the following note: — '*Not long after the publication of the first edition, the following memoriter verses were framed, in the view of lodging more effectually in the memory these points on which the whole fabric of morals and legislation may seem to rest: —*

*Intense, long, certain, speedy, fruitful, pure,
Such marks in pleasures and in pains endure.
Such pleasures seek, if private be thy end:
If it be public, wide let them extend.
Such pains avoid, whichever be thy view:
If pains must come, let them extend to few.'*

Edit. 1823, p. 49.

gencies, — to contemplate it when under extraordinary depression, or when lifted to a state of perilous excitement, — as to calculate the expense of provisions, the progress of population, the advantages of a division of labor, or the possible benefit (or otherwise) of certain political institutions. The object of poetry, as well as of prose, is to spread abroad the knowledge of our age, to transmit the accumulated wisdom of foregone ages to the world around us, and to the times which are to come. They are not two combatants in one arena, with weapons necessarily opposed to each other, in order to secure self-preservation, or some definite reward, which cannot be shared between them. They were both born and brought to light to dispel ignorance, and contend with tyranny and abuse, — to stand up, hand in hand, true champions and assertors of '*the Right*,' for the glory of truth and knowledge, and the undoubted benefit of all the human race.

Notwithstanding these things, and notwithstanding all that has been felt and expressed on behalf of this eminent art, we are now called upon to despise it! The world has lasted six thousand years: it has had, amongst its millions and millions of generations, some few who have soared above the rest, and become marks for the admiration of their fellows, — whose object has been undeniably good, and whose prodigious intellect is beyond question greater than that of any writer of our existing time. These men have hitherto been held to be the benefactors of mankind. They have led them into the temple of philosophy, and there given them wholesome instruction. They have directed them to the exercise of every virtue; and such as have obeyed their

high lessoning have themselves become good and distinguished. They have held before these their followers the mirror of truth (of 'truth severe, in fairy fiction dressed') — have placed before them illustrious examples. They have incited them to gallant deeds — have given them delight in peaceful times and have soothed them in times of pain and sorrow. And now we are told that all this is nothing, or worse than nothing, — and by whom? By those who maintain that knowledge and moral training are the only true blessings of mankind.

There is assuredly much of what is vicious, and more of what is ridiculous, in the world; and all that is decidedly bad should, of course, be amended. But whether it be well to make a wreck of *all* that has so long been valuable and graceful, in order to insure a certain portion of doubtful good, is at least worthy of consideration. The question is — whether Poetry and Art, whether all that touches our sympathies and operates upon our affections, should be rooted up and exterminated, like some long established evil, or widespread disease? For our own parts, we think *not*. We think that they should be permitted to remain; or rather, that they *will* and *must* remain, and flourish, in despite of all prophecies and opinions to the contrary. Can it, in truth, be ever otherwise, so long as hope and ambition, our love of the beautiful, and our sense of the sublime, remain integral portions of our nature?

We owe something, surely, to our Imagination, which has yielded us such frequent delight, as well as to our reason; and we owe yet more to the grand

and lofty spirits who have trod the earth before us, and have died, leaving behind them the imperishable records of their glory. Those immortal writings, dictated by the imagination of poets in their happiest hours, bear upon them the impress of an amazing intellect. They bring forward, for our instruction, all the varieties of man, setting forth, in the colors of truth, his virtues and vices, his strength, his weakness, his obduracy, his pity, his inconsistencies, and follies of a hundred hues, which are nowhere else so completely marshalled and portrayed,—and to show which, and the consequences of which, equally well, the whole region of literature may be traversed, and all the stores of history and philosophy ransacked and compared in vain. And is all this of so little value, that to have done it should entitle the doer to the contempt of his fellows? Is it *indeed* a fact, that Shakspeare and Homer, that Chaucer, Dante, Milton, and the rest, have lived for no purpose but to be an idle sound? Was all their wisdom, all their wit, indeed empty, contemptible, and useless? Are the great moral pictures of Macbeth and Othello, of Satan, and Timon, and Lear, and all that illustrious array of characters, *nothing* — but only shadowy and unprofitable illusions? Is there *nothing* real in their texture — nothing of what is good or useful in their histories? Is the philosophic vein of Hamlet worn out or become base? And has his intellectual stature shrunk and fallen below that of every puny logician? Or, is it not, after all, that the opposing ideas of the utilitarians on these points are themselves groundless and illusory,

— as inimical to true reason as the most extravagant and distorted metaphors of the tawdry rhetorician, and as difficult to be reduced to practice as the wildest dreams of the poet?

1828.

FOUR DRAMATIC SCENES.

I.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

[SCENE. — *The Study of Michael Angelo at Rome.*]

MICHAEL ANGELO AND PUPILS.

MICHAEL.

So, 't is well done, Battista ; ably drawn.
Do thus, and thou wilt need no marble fame.

1st PUPIL.

Look, Michael !

MICHAEL.

Ah ! 'tis bad. These colors sleep
Like death upon thy figures : touch them thus.
This flesh is like a cardinal, red and dull :
Thought should lie pale upon the scholar's cheek ;
Thus, — thus. And now, my young friend, Cosimo,
Give me thy sketch ; nay do not fear me. So —
Why thou hast overwrought this shape, my child,
Cheating (fie on 't !) air-travelling Ganymede
Of his boy-beauty. See, — 'tis thus : that eye —
Lash'd with dark fringe : touch the lip tenderly ;
And hide his forehead all in cloudy gold.

See, let him lie thus, — helpless ; thus, my child ;
And clasp the eagle's talon round his arm.
There, — it is done. What think'st thou ?

2D PUPIL.

Oh ! 't is brave,
'Tis brave. Thy eagle is the king of eagles.
As thou art king of painters.

MICHAEL.

Idle child !

2D PUPIL.

Shall I win fame ?

MICHAEL.

Fame is a bounteous tree :
Upon its branches hang bubbles and gold.
Which wilt thou have ?

2D PUPIL.

Both, Michael.

MICHAEL.

Art so greedy ?
Thou 'lt scarcely prosper. Wilt thou be the dog
Who grasp'd at flesh and shadow, and lost all ? —
Bring me that head of Faunus, Giacomo :
That — big as a giant, with snaky locks,
And the wild eyes, and nostrils stretch'd and blown.
Ha ! this is right.

3D PUPIL.

'Tis like a Titan, Michael.
None but thyself can master these great shapes

MICHAEL.

Ha, ha ! — There, give it me, good Giacomo.
Why, how thou fix'st thine eye upon its eye :
Wouldst thou wage battle with it, Giacomo ?

3D PUPIL.

Shall I not copy it ?

MICHAEL.

Surely : but take heed : —
Mar not the thought which thou dost gaze upon,
Translating it in blind obedience ;
But steal the *spirit*, as old Prometheus won
From Phœbus' fiery wheels the living light.
It is not dainty shadows, nor harlot hues,
(Though flush'd with sunset, like Vecelli's gawds,)
Will make a painter. Take great heed the *mind*
Live in the eye, and the wild appetite
Breathe through the bosom and the sinewy shape.
Come near me. Mark ! do not thou miss that turn.

[RAFFAELLE enters.]

RAFFAELLE.

Good morrow, Michael. How thrive thy designs
For the Pope's chapel ?

A PUPIL.

Buonarotti !

MICHAEL.

Ha !

Who speaks ?

RAFFAELLE.

Thy pupil. Come I in good time ?

MICHAEL.

Look and decide

[*Shows the picture.*]

RAFFAELLE.

'Tis grand and beautiful.

MICHAEL.

This visage came upon me while I slept.

RAFFAELLE.

O the rich sleep ! Couldst thou not cozen her
To quit her poppies, and aye toil for thee ?

MICHAEL.

Methought I lived three thousand years ago,
Somewhere in Egypt, near a pyramid,
And in my dream I heard black Memnon playing :
He stood twelve cubits high, and, with a voice
Like thunder when it breaks on hollow shores,
Call'd on the sky, which answer'd. Then he awoke
His marble music, and with desert sounds
Enchanted from her chamber the coy Dawn.
He sang, too — O such songs ! Silence, who lay
Torpid upon those wastes of level sand,
Stirr'd and grew human : from its shuddering reeds
Stole forth the crocodile, and birds of blood
Hung listening in the rich and burning air.

RAFFAELLE.

Didst dream all this ?

MICHAEL.

Ay, Raffaele ; and so gazed

On Theban Memnon, that his image sunk
Fix'd in my brain. Lo ! this is he thou look'st on.

RAFFAELLE.

'Tis Faunus, is it not ? That wreath of leaves,
The crook, the panther skin, the laughing eyes,
And the round cheek — or Bacchus ? Ah, 'tis *he*.

MICHAEL.

No ; 'tis the wood-god Faunus.

RAFFAELLE.

A brave god.

Stay ! — let me gaze upon it. Thus — ay thus —
You drove your pencil round, and thus — and thus : —
I never stood before a face so fine.

MICHAEL.

'Tis a free sketch ; I know it.

RAFFAELLE.

Thou shouldst paint
Gods, my good Michael, and leave earth to me.

MICHAEL.

The children and the women thou *wilt* have :
What need to ask what thou hast won already.

RAFFAELLE.

Hark ! there are footsteps coming.

MICHAEL.

'Tis the Pope.

[POPE JULIUS II. *enters, with attendants.*]

POPE.

We come to visit thee, good Buonarotti.

MICHAEL.

Your holiness is welcome.

POPE.

What hast thou done ?

MICHAEL.

Since yesterday ? — but little, save design :

This head, and that.

POPE.

This takes my fancy much.

RAFFAELLE.

Your holiness is right.

POPE.

So, who art thou ?

MICHAEL.

'Tis Raffaelle Sanzio.

POPE.

Ha ! and who is he ?

MICHAEL.

A painter, holy father ; and a good one.

POPE.

What else ?

MICHAEL.

Some drawings, which your holiness
Will prize but little. I've been plotting lately.

POPE.

Thine is a tedious art : is 't not so, Michael ?

MICHAEL.

'Tis hard to compass.

POPE.

Ay, and slow to live.

MICHAEL.

True ; — but it lives for ever.

RAFFAELLE.

Like Renown,
Which clothes with sun and life the deeds of men,
Building on earth a world which may outlast
Its strong foundation. Give *me* Fame — on earth ;
And, when I leave sweet earth, a finer sphere,
Where Beauty breaketh like a summer morn.
Let me have voices, too, heart-wakening words,
All touch'd like pictures with the soul of thought :
So will I dream over Elysian flowers,
And listen to music, and quaff nectar-dew,
And lie in the light of love, and paint for ever —

POPE.

Peace ! peace ! what's this ?

MICHAEL.

He *hath* a liberal fancy.

POPE.

He fills his horn fuller than Fortune's.

MICHAEL.

Now I would rather lie on some vast plain,
And hear the wolves upbraiding the cold moon,
Or on a rock when the blown thunder comes
Booming along the wind. *My* dreams are nought,
Unless with gentler figures fierce ones mix, —
Giants with Angels, Death with Life, Despair
With Joy : — even the Great One comes in terror
To *me*, apparell'd like the fiery storm.

RAFFAELLE.

Thy fancy was begat i' the clouds.

MICHAEL.

My soul
Finds best communion with both ill and good,
Some spirits there are, all earth, which only thrive
In wine or laughter. So my nature breathes
Darkness and Night, Power or the death of Power ; —
A mountain riven — a palace sack'd — a town
Rent by an earthquake (such as once uptore
Catania from its roots, and sent it down
To the centre, split in fragments) — Famine, Plague —
Earth running red with blood, or deluge-drown'd.
These are *my* dreams : — and sometimes, when my
brain
Is calm, I lie awake and think of God.

POPE.

Michael !

MICHAEL.

A vision comes which has no shape ;

None, though I strain my sight, and strive to draw
Some mighty fashion on the trembling dark, —
'T is gone : — again I draw, again 't is flown ;
And so I toil in vain.

POPE.

But thou must dream
Again for me, good Michael. We must show
A dream that shall outlast the walls of Rome.

MICHAEL.

I'll do my best ; but thought is as a root
That strikes which way it will through the dark brain :
I cannot force 't.

RAFFAELLE.

What wilt thou paint — *a World* ?

MICHAEL.

Ay — its Creation.

RAFFAELLE.

Make it fresh and fair :
Breathe all thy soul upon it, until it glow
Like day. Clasp it all round with Paradise,
Color, and light, green bowers —

MICHAEL.

I'll make it bare.
Like man when he comes forth, a naked wretch,
So shall his dwelling be, — the barren soil.

POPE.

This must not be. It is not writ i' The Book.

MICHAEL.

Pardon me : I must chase my own poor thought,
Which way soever it turn.

RAFFAELLE.

Still earth should bloom !

MICHAEL.

It should be like the time. I will not paint
Antediluvian Adam when first he sprang
From dust, — strong, active, like the autumnal stag ;
But * with limbs *dawning* into sinewy strength.
Nor will I plant the full-blown intellect
On his bright eye, but therein gently unfold
Young Adoration —

RAFFAELLE.

Right ! 'T will grow and blossom.

Now for thine Eve.

MICHAEL.

Um ! Must there be a woman ?

RAFFAELLE.

'Must !' — Thou wouldst paint a barren world indeed.
Thou never lovedst.

MICHAEL.

I have : nay, I love still.

RAFFAELLE.

Whom ? what ?

MICHAEL.

MINE ART.

* See his picture. 'Dominus Deus formavit hominem ex solo terræ.'

RAFFAELLE.

Why, so do I: — yet I love women too.
Thy humor feeds one sense and starves the rest.

POPE.

A poor economy. The youth speaks well.

MICHAEL.

Perhaps: yet, the first man was born *alone*,
Companionless, a prodigy, like Light.
Birds and the desert brutes awaited him:
Nought else. A world there was (fair if thou wilt);
Yet Eden grew not before Adam rose.
After his birth, indeed, we may have wrought
That pleasant garden, wherein the Devil stole
And tempted Raffaele's goddess soon to sin.

RAFFAELLE.

Stop there, stop there! The man —

MICHAEL.

Alas! he fell.

He ate perdition from the woman's hand.
Death for himself — (he was not *born* to die,
But live the lord of this eternal star) —
Death for himself and race, despair and toil,
Peril, and passion which no joy can quench,
Grief here, and Hell hereafter, — these he earn'd.
Shall I paint all this truly?

RAFFAELLE.

Why not? — yes.

POPE.

Do as thou wilt. Man's life is full of troubles.

MICHAEL.

It is a pillar writ on every side
With fiery figures. Shall we show them all ?

POPE.

No : the first fall, — no more.

MICHAEL.

Yes, the fierce moral.

That let me do ; for I have sketch'd already
Dark phantasies, and broke up graves, and blown,
In thought, the heart-piercing trumpet, whose loud cry
Shall blast the dreams of millions.

POPE.

What is this ?

RAFFAELLE.

The Judgment.

MICHAEL.

Ay, the Judgment.

Look ! — In the middle, near the top, shall stand
Jesus, the Saviour : by his side mild crowds
Of followers, and Apostles hovering near.
Here shall be seen the bless'd, and there the damn'd, —
Sinners, whom diabolic strength shall hurl
Down to perdition. Insolent visages,
Born in the sleep of Sin, shall flesh their fangs ;
Dwarfs, devils, and hideous things, and brute abortions ;
Some who make sick the moon, and some who hide

Their monstrous foreheads in a reptile's mask :
Pale Palsy, and crook'd Spasm, and bloated Plague,
And Fear, made manifest, shall fill the wind
With Hell, — for Hell is horror, link'd to pain —

POPE.

No more. Thou dost bewitch my flesh to ice.

RAFFAELLE.

No more, good Buonarotti. Now farewell !

MICHAEL.

Farewell !

RAFFAELLE.

Thy figures haunt me, like Disease.
I must go hear some Roman melody,
Accomplish'd music, and sweet human words,
And bask beneath the smiles which thou dost scorn.
When I am disenchanted —

MICHAEL.

Come again.

RAFFAELLE.

I will : farewell ! Father, thy holy blessing.

POPE.

My blessing on thee, son ! Michael, farewell !

[*Exeunt.*]

II.

PANDÆMONIUM. A SKETCH.

[SCENE — PANDÆMONIUM. *A vast Hall, dimly lighted is seen, and in the distance a river of fire. A throne and seats around it are vacant. A band of SPIRITS is heard in the air.*]

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Spirits ! Angels ! Cherubim !
Kings, and Stars, and Seraphim !
Armies, and battalions — driven
Headlong from the azure Heaven
By the keen and blasting light,
And the racking thunder-blight,
And the terror of The Ban, —
Come ! unto our great Divan !
[*Hosts of Spirits descend and rise up from different quarters. MOLOCH descends suddenly and takes his station. CHORUS resumes.*]

Come ! He comes, the crimson king !
On his broad wide-wandering wing,
As a comet, fierce and bright,
Rushes through a moonless night.

[*BELIAL descends swiftly upon his throne.*]
He is come, the angel brother !
Fairer, and yet like the other,
As the thought is like the deed,
Swift, but with unerring speed.

[*ABADDON descends.*]

And a third (amongst a choir
Of thunders) — the sublime Destroyer !

Who from blood did take his birth,
 And built his fame upon the earth,
 Higher than the victor's glory,
 Death-propp'd and made false in story.

[MAMMON descends slowly.]

SPIRITS.

Who is this, — a flaming error,
 Without speed or sign of terror,
 Cover'd by his golden robe ?

Chorus.

He is king of all the globe ;
 Master of the earthen deeps,
 Where the blind bright treasure sleeps ;
 Crowned lord of courts and bowers,
 Dicers' hearts, and women's hours.
 [A host of Spirits is heard rushing forwards.]
 Come ! — They come. The air is heavy
 With the iron-banded levy.
 Every wind is loaded well
 With the rank and wealth of Hell ;
 And the fiery river dashes,
 Bounding into double light,
 As one by one a Spirit flashes
 On the cloud-incumber'd night.
 The triple dog doth quit his feast,
 And bayeth at the burning East :
 [The light increases : flowers are seen springing up.]
 And, lo ! the vast blood-grained flowers
 Unfold wide their broad pavilions ;
 And the night-extinguish'd dreams,

And the star-awaken'd millions
Clothe them in fresh powers,
And rush to the dawning beams.

SPIRITS.

Come, O come ! In this crimson air,
The children of ruin and sin are fair :
We shout and we play,
For Death is away,
Making on Earth a dark holiday.
O King of the Night !
Where sleeps thy scorn ?
Where tarries thy light,
O Prince of Morn ? —
Come ! O come !

[*The approach of SATAN is seen afar off.*]

Come ! — He comes, he comes, he comes !
Strike the tempest from the drums !
Scatter music on the air !
Drown the dissonant tongues of care !
Bid the raging trumpets blow !
Let the crimson liquor flow !
Bid the Bacchanals shriek and cry,
'Till the madden'd Echoes fly
Round and round the mighty halls,
Where the fiery river falls !

[*He is distinguished nearer.*]

Come ! — He comes, the king of kings !
On his bright angelic wings,
Which have swept through space and night,
Swifter than the arrow's flight,

Thorough Chaos and its dark stream,
As a thought doth pierce a dream.

[SATAN *descends upon his throne which expands.*]

GENERAL CHORUS of *Spirits.*

Hail, all hail ! — Thy brethren bowed
Welcome thee from flame and cloud, —
Spirits of the wind and thunder,
(Who have lain in sullen wonder
Ever since the great Dismay,)
Stand up again in their strong array, —
Eagle spirits who face the Sun —
Gods, whose glittering deeds are done
On the crumbling edge of ruin,
When the muttering storm is wooing
(With love-threats upon his lips)
Earthquake, or the coy eclipse.
Hail ! Hail ! Hail ! — We sing
Great welcome unto our exile king !

SATAN.

Spirits ! for this large welcome thanks as large !
Hail all ! — Since last we met I have been wandering,
Through stars and worlds, to the shut doors of Heaven ;
And thence have sailed round the huge globes which lie
Lazily rolling in the twilight air,
And done ye service. — On one (a belted world)
I alit, and faced great statues like ourselves,
On one a race of madmen, on another
Women to whom the planets came down at night :
All shapes I look'd on, — souls of every tinge,

From black ambition down to pallid hope :
 Some worshipp'd the white moon, and some the sun,
 Some stars, some darkness, and a host — themselves.
 Some bow'd before Abaddon's glory : some
 Call'd on our Moloch here, and drank hot blood :
 Others to princely Mammon knelt, and watched
 His golden likeness ; while our Belial (shaped
 Like Venus or libidinous Bacchus) reigned
 Omnipotent as Death. Even myself a few
 Did not disdain. —
 Spirits ! — I have sown fear
 Deep in bold hearts, and discord amidst calm ;
 Sharp hate I planted in the soil of love,
 And jealousy, that bitter weed which springs
 Even in the sky. Doubt and revenge I gave
 To worms, which else had crawl'd, whereat they
 rear'd
 Their straining necks on the mountain-tops, and stood
 Questioning every pale star on its way,
 And argued 'gainst fierce Fate, until the doors
 Of Death gave back in fear, and they were — gods !
 This have I done, and for it claim your thanks.

ALL.

Hail ! Hail ! —

SATAN.

Since when I have flown across the perilous deep,
 Haunted by pain : the crash of rocks upturn
 Sang by me, and the loud mad hurricanes
 Roar'd through the ether, and hot lightnings sought me,
 And bellowing in my track the thunder ran.

MOLOCH.

Still thou art here, unhurt ?

SATAN.

Still I am here, ,

Undaunted and untouch'd. — Now speak, Abaddon ?

What hast thou wrought on earth these hundred years ?

ABADDON.

Earth has, thou know'st, been Moloch's. When he
drove

His red battalions through the wind, I chained
Outrageous Famine in her den, and fed
The blue Plague till it panted into sleep ;
Then to the Earthquake gave a populous town,
And so they rested : yet, — to pass my time,
I pluck'd a Seville doctor from his chair,
And, cloth'd in his lusty likeness, taught through Spain
Averroes and Galen. I talked boldly,
Concocted poisons, and foretold eclipse,
And wed inseparably mind to dust :
So I'd a host of sceptics. Some went mad ;
Some led their souls out through a gash i' the side ;
The rest drank deep of Xeres. What did'st thou ?

[*To Mammon.*]

MAMMON.

Hearing there was a Cardinal about to die,
I lay me down beside the Vatican ;
And, when I saw his soul escape in smoke
Over Saint Peter's, I uncased my spirit,
And stole into the scarlet churchman's heart.
His corpse was quite oppress'd, so many mourn'd !

Sighs that would ships unanchor, groans which shook
 The Palatine and its myrtles, heaved the room :
 To stay which storm I rose. You should have seen
 The petticoat-mourners ! Two sad sons o' the Pope
 Cried 'Curse !' and dried their grief : the rest all fled.
 How well I did as —, — — the ———,
 Becomes not me to mention.

BELIAL.

I have drunk deep
 Amongst the Mussulmans, and unveil'd looks
 In cloisters that made monks forget their beads, —
 Blown lax siroccos on strong honesty,
 And fired with amorous dreams the virgin's sleep —

SATAN.

What says our gravest brother ?

BEELZEBUB.

I sate beside
 A throned king, and was his counsellor :
 And we knit laws together, such as bind
 Strong hearts unto our side, and some which chained
 The panther-people, as the witchmoon binds
 In terror or mute dreams the raging sea.
 Sometimes these links fell shatter'd ; but we glued
 The fragments with hot blood, and all grew firm.
 At last, that million-headed beast, whose frown
 Doth scare even thrones — the riotous rebel mob
 Rose up, and trod my master-king to dust.
 I left his fragments on the city gates,
 And flew to join ye.

SATAN.

The same burthen still.

MAMMON.

This picture hath two sides ; and one is bright.
Wilt thou hear *all* ? — Our gold forgets its power :
It glitters still, looks rich, and smiles — but yet,
Like a false friend, it fails.

ABADDON.

Men multiply
Like worms ; but though the strong still slay the weak,
Yet 't is not much. Some rascal qualities,
Pity, Remorse, and Fear, usurp men's souls.

MOLOCH.

Away ! away !

BELIAL.

The church, which late we thought
Grew up so lofty with its load of clay
And toppled to its ruin, now revives.

SATAN.

Ah, Moloch ! did I not confide to *thee*
That dusty planet ?

MOLOCH.

I have done my best :
Nay, have done well, too. For a hundred years
The wretches have been fighting, men and boys,
Slandering, thieving, lying, cutting throats,
And drown'd their passions in a crimson rain.

Fierce Ignorance in college and church has sate
Throned, and (from fear) respected. Knaves have
thrived :

Fools have sprung up and prosper'd : Truth has perish'd.
A few poor devils only (spare the word !)
Have starved themselves in caves, or preach'd to air
'Bout matters beyond *my* capacity.

BELIAL.

'Tis that, good Moloch, which has wrought this ill.

SATAN.

These imps, though small, are cunning. Thy plain
virtue

Is no match for their tricks. Our Belial here
Shall waste his leisure there a hundred years.
Wilt thou have comrades ?

BELIAL.

One. Our friend here (Mordax)
Will give me his aid perhaps, unless he owns
Some better engagement for the time. Wilt go ?

SATAN.

Speak, spirit ! Wilt thou follow our great brother ?
Mark ! if thou dost, — though *here* thou'rt free as wind,
Thou must obey.

MORDAX.

I will obey the prince.

SATAN.

'Tis right. — (*To Belial.*) He shall have license and
large gifts,

And take what shapes he likes and stretch of power.
Hast thou matured thy plan? Dost thou affect
Any particular quarter of the globe?

BELIAL.

No, so it be but warm; somewhere i' the South.

MORDAX.

If I may speak —

SATAN.

Speak out!

MORDAX.

As there are some
Who in the race of thought outstrip the rest,
And pluck the fruit alone, — would 't not be well
To make one great example? — there is a fellow,
Who, as 'tis boasted, scares the swerving stars,
Hoodwinks the moon, and earthquake and eclipse
Commands by strength of prayer; and he can tame
The tempest, and vast seas, though raging mad.
He untwists dreams: Time he outstrips; and looks
Right through the future. Thus men *boast*. In fact,
He *can* read our black language.

SATAN.

How! — Who is 't?

MORDAX.

A Count of Ortiz, Fernan de Marillo.

SATAN.

He is descended from a meddling stock.
One of his fathers I struck dead with lightning

At Cordova. *He* fain would read our acts,
And learn the qualities of death and fire.
Hie thee to Spain, good Mordax ! Fly, my brother !
There 's much to do on earth if this be true.

BELIAL.

'T is truth, indeed. I have some good friends there,
Inquisitors, and nobles, and cowl'd monks,
Who, with the common herd, will give us help.

MORDAX.

Ay — Montemar, and Sanchez, and the Pope
Will aid us, and — and — Nunez —

SATAN.

Sir, speak truth !

You are not now on earth 'midst dust and worms,
But in the palace of your king, where Truth
Reigns as in air. Be silent !

MOLOCH.

There is nothing

I hate so utterly as an useless lie.

MORDAX.

Pardon !

SATAN.

Thou hast our license to betray,
To sting, to slander, and to practise pain
On earth, — not here.

BELIAL.

Poor fellow, pardon him !

He could not help it : Nature —

SATAN.

He's forgiven.

No more, good brother ! we must say farewell.
When thou art gone, we will proceed in council.

BELIAL.

Farewell ! I'll have some curious tales for you
At our next meeting. Long farewell to all !

[BELIAL and MORDAX ascend, and are gradually
lost in the distance.]

CHORUS.

Fare ye well ! Farewell ! —
May ye prosper, wheresoever
Through the scorned earth ye go,
Amidst death and pain and woe,
Smiting always, healing never.

Fare ye well ! Farewell ! —
All the regions of great Hell
Echo their wide wonder,
That a god should elsewhere roam,
And the strong unwieldy thunder
Leaves his black and hollow home,
And along the brazen arches
Pealeth, and the wing'd blast parches
With its breath the iron shore ;
And the billows, in red ranks,
Rush upon the scorched banks,
Sighing evermore !

[Darkness covers the assembly at the con-
clusion of the Chorus.]

III.

RAFFAELLE AND FORNABINA.

[SCENE. — *A room in the palace of the Prince C——.*]

[RAFFAELLE — JULIO ROMANO. (*The picture of 'The Triumph of Galatea' unfinished.*)]

JULIO.

I do not like that head.

RAFFAELLE.

I am sorry for it.

JULIO.

It is too sleek, — too soft, — too —

RAFFAELLE.

'Tis a woman's.

Wouldst have me paint each muscle starting forth?
Or play the anatomist with her delicate limbs,
As Michael doth? — Thou'rt wrong, friend Julio.
Here, in this brawny back, thou see'st I have writ
Strength, and a life of toil: — but *this* — 'tis Love's!

JULIO.

I do not like 't.

RAFFAELLE.

I have done better things;
But let it pass. I want *her* company,
Without whose smiles my figures turn to stone.
Now, look!

JULIO.

I' faith, that *is* a dove-eyed Triton.
With what a milk-fed glance he winds his shell!

I would have fill'd it like the North, and puff'd
 His broad cheeks out like two tempest-blown billows.
This fellow, now, is like a loving shark,
 And wears his spirit in his eyes : — 'tis good.

RAFFAELLE.

Dost thou not see that throughout all this story
 The spirit of Love prevails, in many shapes,
 In some most gentle, and in others warm,
 Whilst in one form, bare lust alone is seen, —
 The blood's rebellion, the —

JULIO.

I understand not.
 Would all were such as *he* !

RAFFAELLE.

Pshaw ! I had better
 Have drawn a herd of bulls lowing about
 One white Europa, than another such.
 — Julio, I tire. I loathe this gaudy prison ;
 I'll paint no more, unless my love be present.

JULIO.

If thou darest trust thy Venus in my sight —

RAFFAELLE.

Ha, ha, ha, ha !

JULIO.

Then why not bring her hither ?

RAFFAELLE.

Hither ? — I will.
 She shall stand here before thee, plain as Truth ;

Less naked, but as white as untouch'd Truth,
Whom slander never blew on. Brace thy heart,
Lest she take all by storm.

JULIO.

What is she like ?

RAFFAELLE

Her eye is like a magnet.

JULIO.

What, i' the Pole ?

Is it set round with ice ?

RAFFAELLE.

With blushing fire ;
With crimson beauty, like the death of day
At midsummer. Her look — O Love ! O Love !
She treadeth with such even grace, that all
The world must wonder, and the envious weep,
Hopeless to match her ever. How I pined
Through months and months (I was a fool and humble)
Till at the last — I won her ! Dost thou hear ?
She's mine, my queen ; and she shall shine a queen.
I'll clasp her round with gems : — Her train shall be
As rich as a comet's —

JULIO.

Art grown mad ?

RAFFAELLE.

I tell thee
I'll pave the way she treads on with pure gold.

She shall not *touch* the soiled earth, and do
The base dust honor. I'll have Cretan pinions
Wrought for her, and a barb whose task shall be
To outfly the wind. Scarfs, fine as the air,
And dipp'd in Iris colors, shall be wove
In sunny Cashmere and the Persian looms,
To be her commonest 'tire. She shall be deck'd
Forth, as she is, a goddess !

JULIO.

O rare love !
What a brave dream thou art ! Great pity 'tis
These rainbows which we weave from our dull thoughts
Should perish in broad noon.

RAFFAELLE.

Once, — I despair'd ! (*Painting.*)
Ha, ha ! — and saw through tears and cloudy dreams :
What wonder that I erred ? But now, — 'tis day !

JULIO.

Ay, ay ; 'tis what we wish it, day or night.
We make our seasons as we make ourselves.

RAFFAELLE.

There, — now I toil no more. While I am gone,
Do thou enrich this panel with some tale.
Let it be gaunt, and wild, dim as a dream :
'Twill well oppose mine own.

JULIO.

I'll do't. Farewell !

RAFFAELLE.

I shall be with thee ere the sun's awake.

Be busy, and farewell !

[*Raff. exit.*]

JULIO.

I'll do't, I'll do't.

— Now, shall I paint the devil ? — Ah, ha ! — or drag

Misshapen Chaos from his dark abysm,

And stretch him, like a giant, in the sun ? —

Or shall I tear the blue from South to North ? —

Or paint a comet plunging through the wind ? —

— This '*Triumph*' of our friend's is wanton soft ;

But there's high matter in the sea-nymph's story

Which might become a painter's pencil well.

He should have drawn the Cyclop, — as he sate

Uplifted like a crag, and piped his songs

Of Galatea to the watery shores.

Some say that Orpheus-like he charm'd dull stones,

Made ocean murmur, and the airy winds .

Took captive ; but 'tis *known* he sigh'd, and sang

The deathful ditties which belong to love ;

And call'd on Galatea : — She the while

Lay mute, and closed — if e'er she heard his strains —

Her soul against his passion. Day by day

He sang, and like the mateless lark call'd forth

The dawn ; and underneath the burning noon

Held mournful celebration, and at eve,

Fatigued by sorrow and strange song, — he wept.

— I cannot fill this panel as he bids. (*Sketching.*)

[*The Prince of C — enters.*]

PRINCE.

So, — where is Raffaele ?

JULIO.

Gone.

PRINCE. *

Gone whither ? — gone ?

JULIO.

Ay, marry ; Cupid called him, and he went.
You'll find him by the two great lemon-trees
Which sleep beside the fountain in his garden.
H'as brought his brown girl there for summer talking.
(*Paints.*)

PRINCE.

'Sdeath ! what art thou doing, Sirrah ?

JULIO.

Um ! — as my master bade me. I have tried —

PRINCE.

Tried ! ay, and fail'd. Get thou to Raffaele, fellow.
Bid him sketch for thee each particular ;
The scene, the groups, the — all. I will not have
My palace painted by a meaner hand.
Bid him come here (if it *must* be) with his — girl,
And paint with Cupid's colors. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

[*The garden of Fornarini, in the suburbs of Rome.*]

FORNARINI and ATTENDANTS.

Will he not come ?

1ST ATTENDANT.

Be patient.

•
FORNARINI.

He'll not come.

The moon, the feigning, fickle, slander'd moon
Will surely come, and every trooping star
Be present at his post in the dark sky,
And not a wind that wooes the laurel leaves
Will dare be absent : But *he* — false, oh false !
Mark, wenches, if ye love — but do not love :
Yet, if ye do, fetter your lovers fast ;
Bind 'em in chains, for love will fail like ice
In summer sunbeams : Trust no smiles, no oaths ;
Bury your hearts beneath demurest frowns ;
And tremble not, nor sigh, if you'd be safe.
— Sing me a song, my child ; I am not well.
[*2d Attend. begins to sing.*]

1ST ATTENDANT.

Hark ! hark !

FORNARINA.

He's here. Mother of love, he's here.
Come ! come away ! I'll fly him like a deer.
Now if he finds me — Ah ! thou faithless one,

[*RAFFAELLE enters.*]

Art come at last ? I will not look on thee.

RAFFAELLE.

Then I must punish thee. (*kisses her.*) Look up !

FORNABINA.

Thou false one !

RAFFAELLE.

Did I not hear the nightingale in the thorn,
Just as I entered ? — Why, what gloom is here ? —
No welcome ? — none ? — Ladies ! who make our nights
Starry as heaven when no cloud's upon it,
Shine and smile sweetly as ye love us. Shame !
What is this sullen sorrow, which so dulls
Your brightness ? Let rain fall, if rain must be,
And strait grow clear again. Look up, sweet heart !

FORNABINA.

Ha, ha, ha, ha ! What seest thou now I look ?

RAFFAELLE.

A world of mischief in those night-black eyes,
And peril on thy mouth.

FORNABINA.

Now, art thou not
A most false lover ? — Thou didst promise me
Thou would'st come long before the sun went down ;
And lo ! he is departing.

RAFFAELLE.

The great sun
Falls from his fiery strength ! — This purple light,
Traveller of the late sky, will soon — how soon ! —
Pass to another world. I love this light :
'Tis the old age of day, methinks, or haply
The infancy of night : pleasant it is.

Shall we be dreaming ! — Hark ? The nightingale,
Queen of all music, to her listening heart
Speaks and the woods are still. Sorrow and joy,
Pleasure that pines to death, and amorous pain
Fill (till it faints) her song. — What sweet noise was't
Came up the garden as I enter'd it ?

FORNARINA.

The sweetest noise on earth, a woman's tongue ;
A string which hath no discord.

RAFFAELLE.

Let me hear it.

Come ! a soft song ! a song !

2D ATTENDANT.

What shall it be ?

FORNARINA.

Sing anything, good girl. Beauty is beauty,
Whether it vie with swan's-down or the rose.
Sing ! — yet not sadly, for the time is mournful,
Nor yet too gaily, that were out of tune :
But sing whatever tempts thee.

2D ATTENDANT SINGS.

SONG.

1.

O summer river !
Why dost thou prolong
Through cold nights for ever
Thy sweet forest song ?

2.

Thou hast some rich hours,
Wherein thou may'st pine
Underneath the flowers
Which shall ne'er be thine.

3.

Through them may'st thou run
Where green branches quiver ;
But when day is done,
Sleep, sweet summer river !

RAFFAELLE.

This music falls on me like slumber,
And crowns me now the toilsome day is over,
With sweets that shame the laurel.

FORNARINA.

Many thanks ! —

I think Marcella's voice grows sweeter daily.

RAFFAELLE.

She'll meet pale Philomel in her haunt, and try
Whose tongue is fleetest. Where was't she did learn ?

FORNARINA.

Beside a river when she was a girl,
Mocking its music, as the cuckoo's tongue
Is mimick'd oft by wandering urchin boys.
Sometimes she cast her voice upon the winds,
And then strove with the waters ; till, at last,
She sings as you have heard. Thanks, girls ! now
leave us. *[Attend. exeunt.]*

RAFFAELLE.

How soft a prelude are sweet songs to love !
I should be humble, but those sounds have crept

Into my blood and stirred it. After music
What should be heard but kisses? Take thy due.

FORNARINA.

Tush! Tush!

RAFFAELLE.

Come nearer to me, — near. Mad Jove
Ne'er loved white Leda with such amorous heat,
Nor Dis (forsaking his Tartarean halls)
Pale Proserpine, as I do rage for thee.
Come nearer, thou wild witch! nearer, I say.
Be to me as the green is to the leaf,
Crimson to roses, juice to the fresh plant,
My life, my strength, my beauty —

FORNARINA.

I am here.

RAFFAELLE.

I love thee — dost thou hear? — I languish for thee.
Oh! I have left sweet praises for thee, — gold, —
Scarlet ambition, and the crown'd delight
Which waits upon great men who dare and do.
Near, near, — I have left — ha, ha! — a Triton wind-
ing
His brawny arms around a shapeless nymph,
God Cupid without eyes, fish without tails,
And Galatea naked as the dawn.
What is it that I see in those black eyes
Beyond all others?

FORNARINA.

Love! 'Tis love for thee! —

But, what didst paint to-day?

RAFFAELLE.

A team of dolphins,
A brace of Tritons and a crooked shell,
And some thoughts else, — which I forget. These
things
Shine well enough for men below the moon :
But *I* have taken horse for Venus' chamber,
Where I must sleep to-night. — Our patron prince
Will wax most wroth when he doth learn my flight.
No matter ; he must cool.

FORNARINA.

But thou hast left
Thy friend — thy pupil — him — what is his name ?
Thy uncouth — clever scholar ?

RAFFAELLE.

Julio Pippi.
Troth, he's as rough as winter. Here he is !
[*JULIO ROMANO enters.*]
Why, what has brought thee here ?

JULIO.

Oh ! princely frowns,
A vulgar word or two, a Roman oath.
— Rather than toil for these same well-fed dogs
With a gold badge and a line which runs to Adam,
I'll visit a wolf, and starve. Your lord, your prince
Disdains my pencil, Sir — commands me stop.
I'll paint him with a flaming robe in Hell,
And give him a dog-fish's head.

RAFFAELLE.

Heed him not, Julio.

If he condemn thy labor, he's a fool ;
And so no more of him. Thou shalt paint for me.

JULIO.

I will. Shall't be an earthquake ? — or a storm ?

RAFFAELLE.

Neither ; yet something which will suit thee well.
Dost love a marvel ?

JULIO.

Do I ? — By the Gods,
Who dreamt upon Greek clouds Olympus-high,
I love a quaint, wild, wonder-stirring tale.
Let it be Goth or Roman, what care I,
So that each line be stuff'd with witchery.

RAFFAELLE.

Then this will suit thee. Now, mark well the story.
— 'Tis said that in some land, I think in Spain,
(Rising upon you like an awful dream)
A wondrous image stands. 'Tis broad and gaunt,
Tall as a giant, with a stormy front
And snaky hair, and large eyes all of stone ;
And arm'd — or so it seems — from head to heel
With a crook'd falchion and enormous casque
And mighty links of mail which once were brass.
And spurs of marble, and marmoreal limbs,
All bent like one who staggers. Full at the East
It glares like a defiance, lowering, bold,
And scorn still lurks about its steadfast eye,
And on its brow a lordly courage sits.

— This statue, as 't is told, was once a king,
A fierce idolater, who cursed the moon
And hated heaven, yet own'd some hellish sway : —
A strange religion this, and yet it was so.
Well, — he was born a king, as I have said,
And reign'd o'er armed millions without law :
He sold brave men for beggar gold, and stain'd
The innocent youth of virtue : he robbed altars ;
Ate, like Apicius ; drank, like Afric sands,
Rivers of wine ; then fell to frenzy. — At last
Swarming rebellions (like the Atlantic stirred
To madness by the bellowing of great storms)
Rose up, and lash'd to wrath by horrid wrongs,
Hunted the tyrant from his brazen throne —
Hunted him like a wolf from cave to cave,
Through rocks and mountains and deep perilous glens,
Day after day, — night after night, — until
His soul burst out in curses. — On one dull dawn,
Which show'd him lurking to relentless foes,
He flung some terrible reproach at Heaven ;
Laugh'd at its God, 't is said, and cursed the Sun ;
Whereat the broad eye of the Day unclosed,
And stared him into stone ! —

JULIO.

Oh ! this is brave.

I'll strain my wit but I will do this for thee.

Farewell !

[Julio exit.]

RAFFAELLE.

Farewell ! Farewell !

[Exeunt.]

IV.

THE FLORENTINE PARTY.

A DRAMATIC SCENE.

SCENE. — *The upper part of a meadow, near Florence. It runs sloping down to a river, and is sheltered at the top by a small wood of olives and chestnut-trees, and ornamented in various ways. Fiesolè is in the distance.*

[PAMPHILUS, PHILOSTRATUS, DIONEUS; NEIPHILA (*as Queen*), PAMPINEA, FIAMETTA, EMILIA, PHILAMENA, ELISSA and LAURETTA, — *entering as from behind the wood.*]

NEIPHILA.

COME on, come on! — A little further on,
And we shall reach a place where we may pause.
It is a meadow full of the early spring:
Tall grass is there which dallies with the wind,
And never-ending odorous lemon-trees;
Wild flowers in blossom, and sweet citron buds,
And princely cedars; and the linden boughs
Make arched walks for love to whisper in.
If you be tired, lie down, and you shall hear
A river, which doth kiss irregular banks,
Enchant your senses with a sleepy tune.
If not, and merry blood doth stir your veins,
The place hath still a fair and pleasant aspect:
For in the midst of this green meadow springs
A fountain of white marble, o'er whose sides
Run stories, graven by some cunning hand,

Of pastoral life, and tipsy revelry.
 There will we, 'midst delicious cates, and wines
 Sparkling and amorous, and sweet instruments,
 Sing gentle mischief as the sun goes down. —
 Quick ! but a few steps more — 'round by this copse
 Of olives and young chestnuts (to whose arms
 The vines seem clinging, like so many brides)
 And you will reach't — Ha ! — Stay ! — Look ! here
 it is.

FIAMETTA.

Ha, ha ! Ha, ha ! — Look ! how Philostratus
 Buries his forehead in the fresh green grass.

PAMPHILUS.

Hail, vernal spot ! — We bear to thy embrace
 Pleasures that ask for calm : Love, and Delight ;
 Harmonious pulses where no evil dwells ;
 Smiles without treach'ry ; words all soft and true ;
 Music like morning, fresh and full of youth ;
 And all else that belongs to gentleness.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Come ! — Sit by me !

DIONEUS.

Sit !

NEIPHILA.

Sit all !

DIONEUS.

Thus, — in a circle.
 So, that is well. Now, where is Tindaro ?

•

NEIPHILA.

Ho, Tindaro, our servant !

PHILOSTRATUS.

Laggard knave !

Here, fellow Tindaro ! The queen doth call thee. .

TINDARO (*entering*).

'Call ?' marry ! Had she borne —

PHILOSTRATUS.

How ? How, bold knave ?

Dost dare affirm she cannot bear ?

TINDARO.

Not I.

Not I, by'r lady ! She can bear, no doubt ; —

Is fruitful as a vineyard ; that's past doubt.

But, signor, *I* have borne on these poor shoulders,

Two trunks — look ! look — cramm'd full of wines and
dainties —

Two lutes ; a viol ; besides some ten —

DIONEUS.

Tush ! Tush !

Where are the tables ?

TINDARO.

On Corvino's back ;

And Stephano doth bear the boards for chess ;

And Grasso hath the music. [*Servants enter, laden.*]

DIONEUS.

Place all here.

Thus, — in a circle. Now, awake the wines !

And spread these cloths upon the level ground,
Ho ! there ! — take heed ! thou wilt unstring my lute.
Now, where 's the viol di gamba ? Place it here.
So, — get ye gone unto yon chestnut-tree,
And share your wine in honesty. Away !

[Servants exunt.]

NEIPHILA.

Here will we rest, with all our court about us.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Lauretta and Elissa, come this way.

DIONEUS.

Stay, Fiametta.

FIAMETTA.

With Pampinea ? — Well.

PAMPHILUS.

Here let *us* rest, tender Emilia,
And on this grassy hillock crown'd with flowers,
Place thy white arm. Now let the violets gaze
Their fill, and drink the blue light from thine eyes !
Now let the thievish winds their sweet wealth steal
From the dark riches of thy hair. Look up !

DIONEUS.

Fair Fiametta, dost thou hear him talk ?

FIAMETTA.

He sings; methinks. Or, is 't his voice is sweet ?

DIONEUS.

'Tis sugar'd o'er with flattery. Now, for me — [*aside.*]
The nightingales which haunt about these woods
Grow hoarse, methinks.

FIAMETTA.

How so?

DIONEUS.

They lose their music
(Else say their skill) before your honied words.
Tush! what's a rose? I'll crush these gaudy leaves.
How coarse their crimson is beside thine own!
Had I but lilies, I would burn them straight,
As a white peace-offering to thee. — Come! wilt love
me?

PAMPINEA.

He is a mockbird, and but imitates
The poetry he hears in falser prose.
Turn him to me, and leave him.

FIAMETTA.

No; not so.

He might afflict thy leisure with his groans.
And shouldst thou chance to love him —

PAMPINEA.

I? — Ha, ha!

I hate him like a poison plant. Methinks
His very laugh is perilous.

FIAMETTA.

I will medicine 't; —

Not as men steal the poisonous juice from serpents.

I'll let him *talk*, till his last drop of danger
Be spent, and he is harmless. Look upon me !
What ! wilt thou love me ?

DIONEUS.

Ay ; by foaming Venus !
By all these clinging, creeping, curling vines !
By Love ! — I swear it. As the bee doth gather
Wealth from the rose's lip, I'll steal from thine.

NEIPHILA.

You sing too much in pairs. Break up ! break up !
And in the place of tender falsehoods tell us —

LAURETTA AND ELISSA.

Ha, ha ! Ha, ha !

NEIPHILA.

What's that which moves your mirth ?

LAURETTA.

Ha, ha, ha, ha ! 'Tis an amorous story
Philostratus has read us out of book.

NEIPHILA.

We live all here in honest fellowship.
He who is worth a jest or owns a song
Holds it in trust for this community.

DIONEUS.

Ay, no close purses, Sir ; no hoards of words ;
No merry tales : no serious ; no dull songs,

Learn'd of the cuckoo underneath a pine,
And buzz'd in private to a craz'd guitar.
All is our own. So, speak, Philostratus !

NEIPHILA.

Speak, without more ado.

PHILOSTRATUS.

I —— ? By my soul,
I never tried to tell a tale till now.
I cannot tell it — nay — if you *will* have
A maudlin story, why prepare your eyes ;
We'll have salt tears enow. Once on a time —

FIAMETTA.

Out on thee. That's the schoolboy's stale beginning.

DIONEUS.

I've heard it fifteen hundred times and more.
Beggars unfold such 'neath our valets' windows
At a penny apiece, and they account it dear.

PHILOSTRATUS.

I knew how it would be. So, come ! I'll drink
A bumper of Greek wine and hold my peace.

LAURETTA.

What ! vanquish'd by a man that wears slash'd satin ?
Tush ! thou a soldier ! — Talk no more of love.

PHILOSTRATUS.

I'll tell it, by these teeth ! — Once on a time —

(Oh ! you are still now) — Well — Once on a time,
There lived a king —

DIONEUS.

Prodigious.

PHILOSTRATUS.

An old man,
Who wedded (somewhat rashly) a young wife.

DIONEUS.

I cannot hold my wonder.

FIAMETTA.

Peace, you parrot !

PHILOSTRATUS.

Well, Sirs ; this wife being young, as I have said,
Loved one as young, — a black-hair'd curly man,
Almost a Moor : Your women love such men.

DIONEUS.

His name ? — I see 't. He squinted somewhat — thus, —
A pleasant cast — Go on, and damn thyself !

PHILOSTRATUS.

She loved this curly fellow : he liked her :
The end was that they met. Each night tall Tormes
Stole to her chamber, when king Philip slept,
And lay upon his pillow. For some time Love
Hoodwink'd our ancient king ; but he, being prone
Unto suspicion, as most monarchs are,

Soon read in Helen's looks and Tormes' smile
That he was cuckold.

DIONEUS.

'Tis a filthy name.

PAMPHILUS.

'Tis so : but we must fix on bad and good
Names fit for each : we wreak our scorn, methinks,
Too much on titles, and pass by the deed.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Well, Sirs : Our king, being bred to tricks of state,
And burying anger in a sure revenge,
Watch'd — waited — and surprised the twain asleep.
Yet, being in darkness (lest his lamp might scare
That guilty pair away), he could but know
Two sleepers lay there : whether girl or man
Was but a guess. On this — to mark the one
Whose hair was coarser than the queen's, he knew —
What does he, Sirs, but clips — look ! — shears the
locks
(Then worn in clusters) close into the crown.
This done, goes back and sleeps.

DIONEUS.

An easy fellow !

PHILOSTRATUS.

Well, — Tormes 'wakes : and with a yawn — just
thus —
Rubs his broad palm athwart his neck. Behold !

He starts: — the curls are gone ! The queen weeps
showers ;

Yet suddenly reviving (while her dull swain
Puzzleth in vain, o'er this — then that device)
Bids him haste back, and whispers in his ear.
He laughs — shouts — dons his clothes — and to the
room

Where all his mates (the equerries) lie in dreams,
Hurries, and closely clips each sleeping crown
Bare as his own — Ha, ha ! — the morning comes,
And our great monarch hath a crop-ear'd levee !
He looks — one — two — three — *all* are shorn alike.
Scarce can he hold his wonder : Yet, (being wise,
And wishing not to spread his own disgrace)
Quoth he — ‘ Let him who did this act be dumb,
And do't no more ! ’ — which said, all go their way.
Then, as the story ends, by slow degrees
The king forgave his queen ; this touch'd her heart ;
And she requited him, at last, with love.

DIONEUS.

I do not like your story.

PHILOSTRATUS.

'T is not *mine* ;

But an old record of a woman's wit.
The moral —

DIONEUS.

We'll forgive 't. Some other time —
A twelvemonth hence — when we have had our sup-
pers,
We'll sleep upon 't while thou unravell'st it.

NEIPHILA.

Now, who drinks Aleatico ?

PAMPHILUS, DIONEUS, AND PHILOSTRATUS.

I — I — I —

NEIPHILA.

Here, ladies — here are grapes — (spread out your laps !)

Purple as evening — figs — and cakes, whose tops
Make dull the whiteness of our frosted Alps.

[*Here they feast.*]

PHILOSTRATUS.

Bring here the foreign wines ! (*To the servants.*)

NEIPHILA.

Will none enrich
Our banquet with a song ? O shame upon ye !

PHILOSTRATUS.

More wine ! Bring foreign wines ! Now, which shall't
be ?

[*Sings.*]

Shall 't be Port that flushes
Dark as rubies red ?
Or Burgundy which blushes
Like a bride in bed ?

DIONEUS.

Let 't be full, and rich, and bright,
Dazzling our eyes with liquid light.

PAMPHILUS.

Then 't shall be wild Champagne,
Which flies and falls again,
Crowning the drinker's brain
In dreams all night.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Or Sherry ? sparkling sherry ?
Which makes the drinker merry,
With its fine Borachio flavor ?

DIONEUS.

Or Canary ?

PHILAMENA.

No, that's old ;
And so is Sack, whose kiss doth flavor
Of the wit that 's past and told.

DIONEUS.

Let 't be full, and rich, and bright,
Like a gem that mocks the sight.

PAMPHILUS.

Let it be, — if like a stone,
Like the diamond alone,
Dazzling the night ! —

[*During this song the tables are removed.*]

NEIPHILA.

— And now, sweet sister, where is *thy* sad story ?
For sad it must be, if thy mind doth speak

Its natural music, and no erring star
Bewitch thee to unhealthy merriment.

PAMPHILUS.

I do not think with you : a merry story,
Methinks, is harmless as a tale that's sad.
Yet — speak, Emilia !

EMILIA.

Once — in Florence, here —
In that part which looks toward the hills Pistoian,
There dwelt a lady. She was very fair,
Young, rich, a maiden, noble, tender, free.

DIONEUS.

O Jupiter !

PHILOSTRATUS.

O Vulcan, hammer me i' the head !
I'm budding.

DIONEUS.

What ! i' the head ? — he must have horns.
Is he a goat ? — or —

PHILOSTRATUS.

Peace ! my love's a budding,
Broad, red, all blushes, like a three days' bride.

NEIPHILA.

Silence in court ! Say on, Emilia.
Was she loved, — this lady ?

EMILIA.

By two noble youths :
Guidotto one, a high-born Cremonese,

And one a Pavian, Mutio Imola.
Both dwelt in Florence, where this lady came
With old Certaldo, when those tedious wars
Which vexed the city slept, and men were free
To come from exile to their natural homes.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Call me her name ! My head could never bear
These vague surmisings. ' Lady ' — was she tall ?
Meek ? fair ? — Give me her *name*, and strait I see her :
Else is she but a sound.

EMILIA.

'T was Agatha.

And very fair she was, and very meek,
Tall too, and bent her as yon poplar bows
To the sweet music of the river airs ;
And so it was she whisper'd.

PHILOSTRATUS.

What, in music !

EMILIA.

Ay, Sir ; for what is music, if sweet words
Rising from tender fancies be not so ?
Methinks there is no sound so gentle — none —
Not even the South-wind young, when first he comes
Wooing the lemon flowers, for whom he leaves
The coast of Baiæ — not melodious springs,
Though heard i' the stillness of their native hills —
Not the rich viol, trump, cymbal, nor horn,
Guitar nor cittern, nor the pining flute,
Are half so sweet as tender human words.

PAMPHILUS.

Thou'rt right, dear lady. Pity speaks to grief
More sweetly than a band of instruments ;
And a friend's welcome, or a smiling kiss
Outflourishes the cornet's bridal note.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Go on, go on !

EMILIA.

These rival youths were friends ;
Till Love — which *should* be free from all harsh
thoughts —
Set hate between them. Then, rank jealous cares
Sprang up, and with them many a sharp device —
Plots — quarrels — serenades, wherein the sword
Outmatch'd the cittern. Each had potent friends :
One band the guardian sued, and one the maid,
But neither prosper'd. — In the meantime, the youths
Tired of complaints, and fights which bred out blows,
Resolved to steal what fortune held from them.
One bought the serving-woman's soul with gold,
While mischief won the man : Thus, each had help.
But, tedious 'twere to speak, from day to day,
Of feasts, and watchings — how the Pavian frown'd
Like sullen thunder o'er his rival's hopes —
How with mad violence he traced his steps —
Forced ceaseless quarrel, and out-clamor'd all
The winds in anger. Even the lady's presence
(That altar before which Love loves to lie,
Defenceless, harmless, all his wrongs put off)
Was sullied by the Pavian's contumely.

PAMPHILUS.

What did Guidotto ?

EMILIA.

When his rival left
Certaldo's palace, &c— whose gold had won
The lady's serving-maid to help his suit —
Stole underneath the modest midnight moon
Unto her garden, where, with learned strains
He taught the echoes all to speak his love —
Complain'd not — smiled not — but with tremulous
words,
And looks where sadness strove with humble hopes,
Adored the lady.

PHILOSTRATUS.

Ho ! I see it all.

I see 't. What woman yet did e'er withstand
These modest mournful gentlemen ?

DIONEUS.

Hear ! Hear him !

How he doth trumpet all his virtues !

NEIPHILA.

Hush ! —

Let's know the rest.

EMILIA.

'T was as yon jester says.
Guidotto won the heart of Agatha.

NEIPHILA.

Ay — but the end ?

EMILIA.

One night, the Pavian (warn'd
O' the guardian's absence) burst the palace doors,
And with a riotous crew, whose chief he was,
Stood 'fore the lady's eyes. Once more he told
His burning story — once more swore to die —
Vow'd — menaced — sigh'd — implored — yet moved
her not.

On this, grown desperate, with one arm clasp'd round
Her fainting figure, he bore her through the halls : —

PHILOSTRATUS.

Ha, ha ! Now where 's the modest, moonlight lover ?
The twanger of guitars, the — ?

EMILIA.

Peace ! — He stood
Like flaming anger in the ravisher's path :
And drawing forth his sword, he bade him hail !
For he was come to save him.

PAMPHILUS.

What did the other ?

EMILIA.

Rush'd on his nobler rival — swore some oaths —
Frown'd and denounced destruction. With sure hand
Guidotto warded, and return'd his threats,
And for each blow repaid him with a wound.
At last, the Pavian fell.

PHILOSTRATUS.

The end ? the end ?

EMILIA.

The end was (would 't were better) such as happens
In common tales : — 'Twas shown by some strange
marks,

Which chance, or nature — in their sport — had drawn
Beneath the lady's breast, marring its white —
And by a story which Certaldo told
(All well confirm'd) that Agatha was, in truth,
Own sister unto Mutio Imola.

PHILOSTRATUS.

And so Guidotto won, and there's an end ?

EMILIA.

He wed indeed the gentle Florence lady.
But for the Pavian, *he* (who loved so well
'Midst all his anger) when he heard that tale,
Betook him to far lands or savage haunts.
Some said, he bled a martyr to his faith,
In Syrian countries ; fighting 'neath the flag
Of Godfrey or the lion-hearted king : —
Others that he had fled beyond the woods
Near to Camaldoli ; fed on roots ; and dwelt
Somewhere upon the unshelter'd Apennine.
Certain it is, a hermit like to him
Was known thereafter. In the caves he lived,
Or tops of mountains ; but when winds were loudest,
And the broad moon work'd spells far out at sea,
He watch'd all night and day the lonely shores,
And saved from shipwreck many mariners.
At length — he died, and strangers buried him.

DIONEUS.

Had he no friends ?

EMILIA.

In some lone cemetery,
Distant from towns (some wild wood-girded spot,
Ruin'd and full of graves, all very old,
Over whose scarce-seen mounds the pine-tree sheds
Its solemn fruit, as giving 'dust to dust')
He sleeps in quiet. Had he no friend ? — Oh ! yes.
Pity which hates all noise, and Sorrow, like
The enamoring marble that wraps virgin mould,
And palest Silence who will weep alone,
And all sad friends of Death, were friends to *him* !

NEIPHILA.

Is there no more ?

EMILIA.

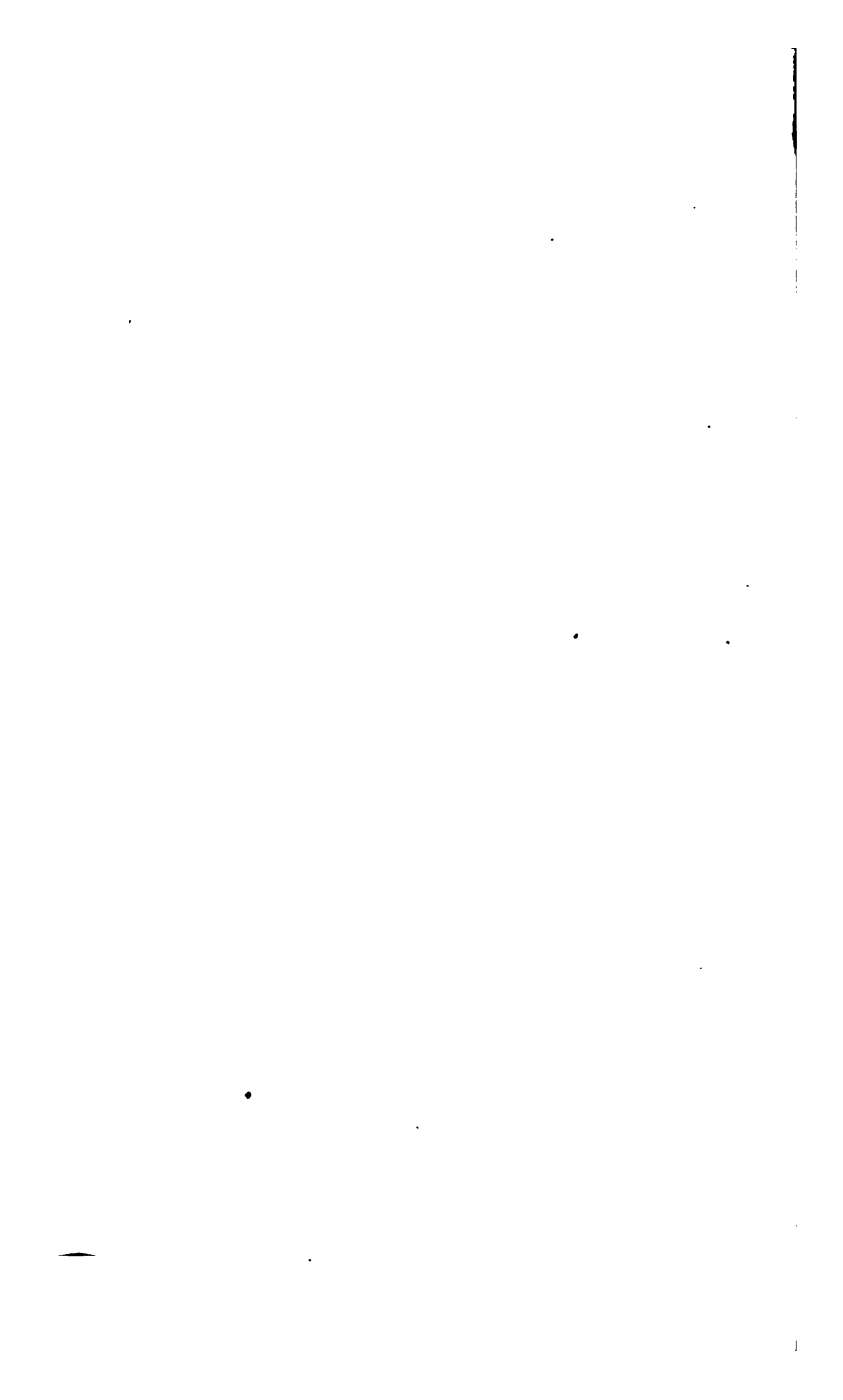
No more. My tale is told.

NEIPHILA.

Then let us go unto the river banks,
And rest awhile under yon plane-tree's shade.
Our fair Emilia there will touch her lute ;
And with a song, where love shall sweeten wisdom,
Bid us take comfort. After such sad stories
What can be heard, save music ? — Follow me !

[*Exeunt.*]

THE END.



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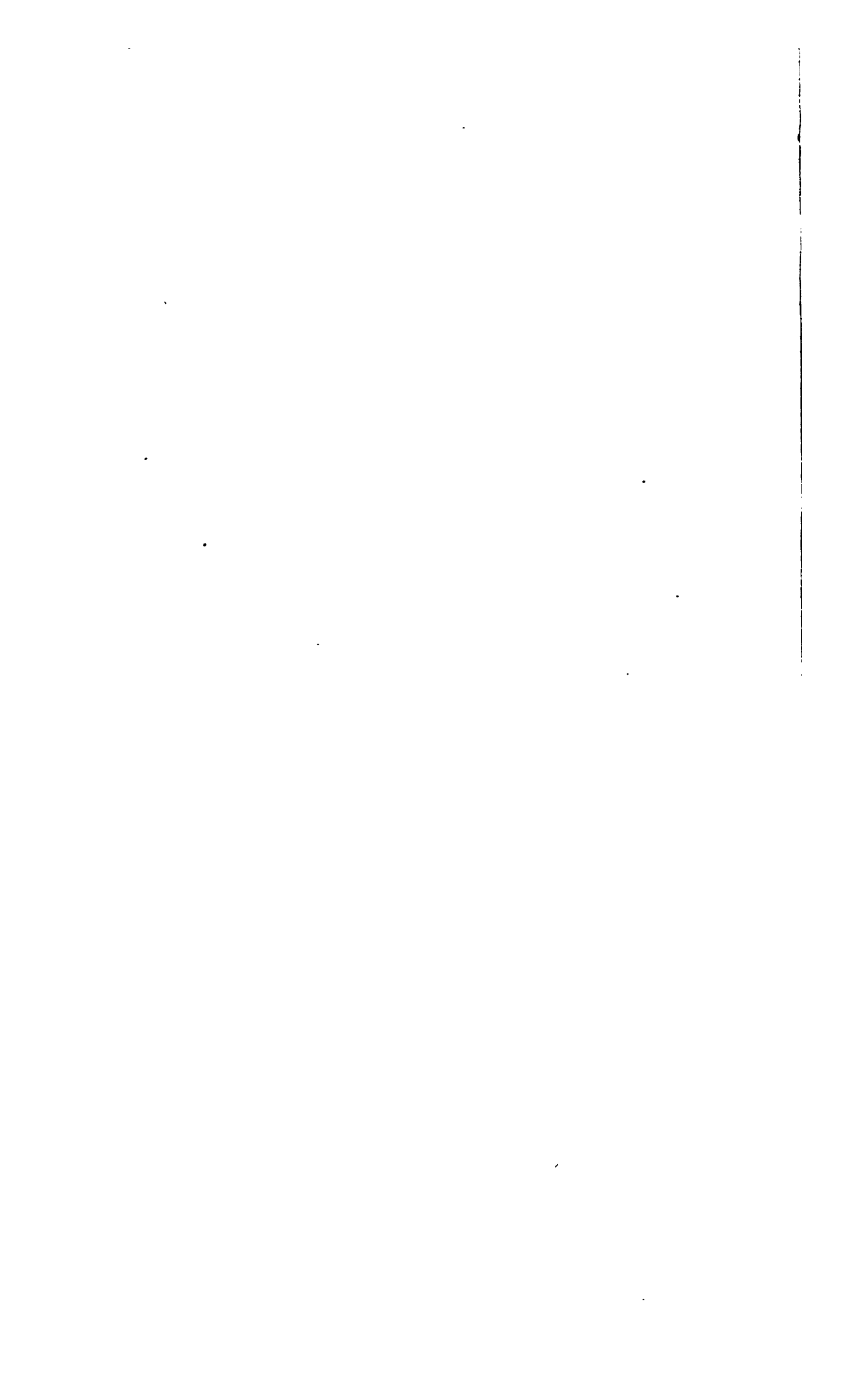
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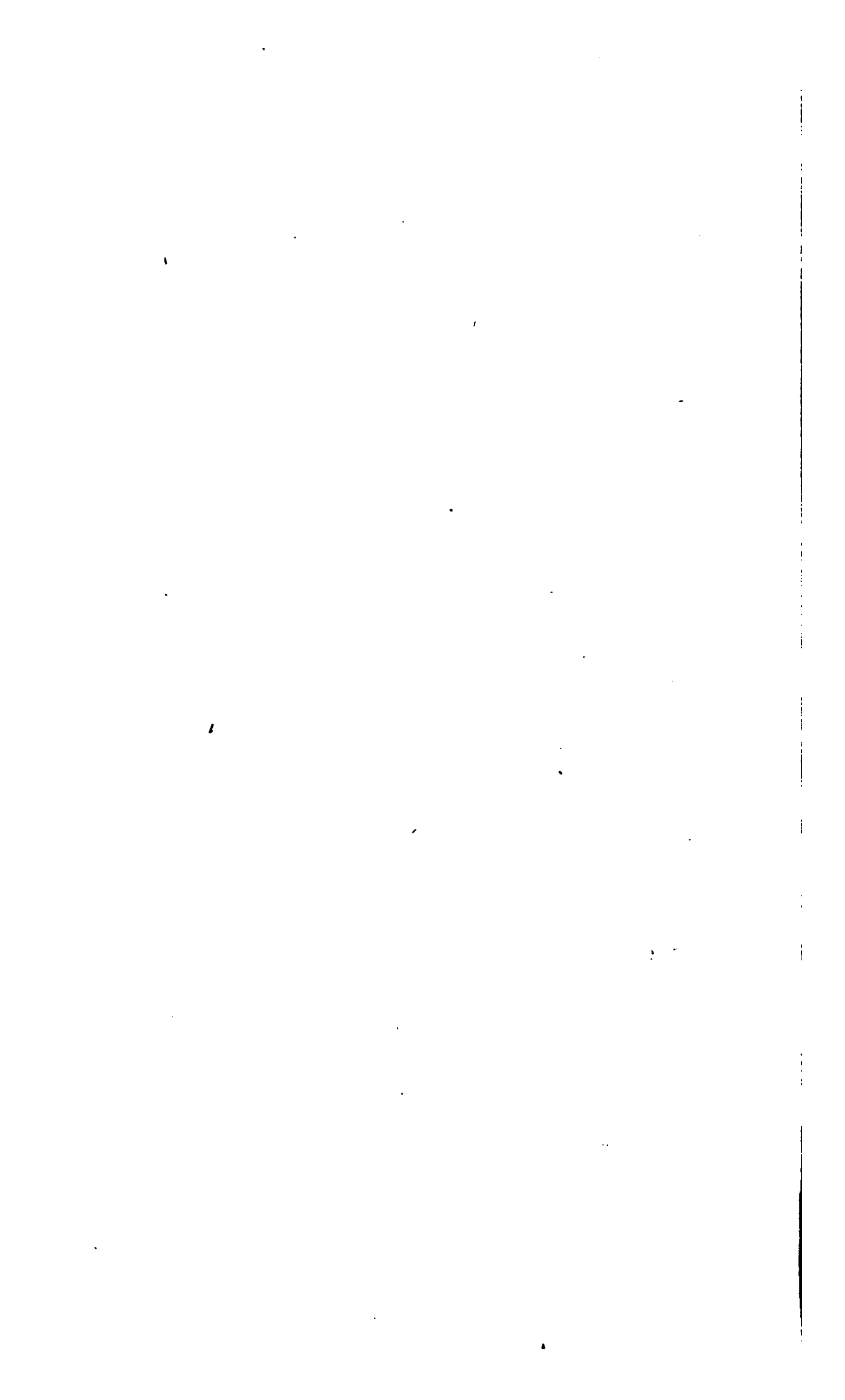
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